

HR Policy & Procedure: Professional Review & Development (PRD) and Professional Update (PU) for Teachers and Associated Professionals

Version 2

Focus. Passion. Inspiration.



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Version Control

Version Number	Effective Date	Details of Last Revision
2.0	3 December 2025	Accessibility update and addition at section 15 PU Early Sign Off
1.0	1 June 2024	Creation of Document

Equality Impact Assessment: TBC

Prepared by: HR Team, PLA and agreed at LNCT

1. Introduction and Scope

1.1. Professional Review and Development (PRD) is an essential part of Professional Update (PU) and professional learning. The General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) defines the process as one which:

Is an entitlement that provides teachers and associated professionals (henceforth, to be referred to as teachers,) with ongoing opportunities to reflect on their practice and personal learning through professional learning conversations supported by an annual review meeting. It is designed to give all teachers the opportunity to:

- engage in a process of reflection and self-evaluation.
- ensure that on an annual basis staff can discuss progress and professional development needs with their line manager and receive high quality feedback.
- review and evaluate progress in meeting targets and PL outcomes and activities agreed which have been undertaken as outlined in GTCS guidance.
- agree annual targets for development and a PL plan with their line manager.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

2.1. When set within a culture of professional trust and positive relationships, high-quality PRD enables teachers, whether they are reviewers or reviewees, to be leaders 'of and for' learning. This engagement helps teachers to meet their own learning needs, the needs of their learners and contribute to school improvement.

2.2. Opportunities should be taken to ensure all teachers become familiar with their roles and responsibilities in their PRD process, with reviewee and reviewer pairings preferably agreed at an early point in the year.

2.3. There is the expectation that school leaders will prioritise the PRD discussions with teachers who are in their professional update (PU) sign off year.

Reviewees:

- Be familiar with the roles and responsibilities in PRD.
- Appreciate and understand the importance of a positive culture and climate of trust.
- Embrace, participate in and promote life-long learning.
- Manage time effectively.
- Understand the benefits of coaching.
- Consider where you see yourself in your career.
- Know where and how to access professional learning opportunities.
- Be prepared to challenge unconscious bias and that of others.
- Self-evaluate across the Professional Standards and identify strengths and areas for development.

- Record professional learning in a reflective journal.
- Engage in meaningful ongoing dialogue with reviewer and others.
- Make ongoing links between PRD, Professional Learning and Professional Update.

Reviewers:

- Be familiar with the roles and responsibilities in PRD.
- Appreciate and understand the importance of a positive culture and climate of trust.
- Embrace, participate in and promote life-long learning.
- Manage time effectively.
- Know where and how to access professional learning opportunities to support the reviewee.
- Be prepared to challenge unconscious bias and that of others.
- Engage in ongoing professional discussions with reviewee.
- Be trained in coaching approaches and understand the benefits.
- Be knowledgeable of career pathway options to support career conversations.
- Be familiar with the professional Standards to promote reflective professional dialogue.

Senior Leadership Team in Schools:

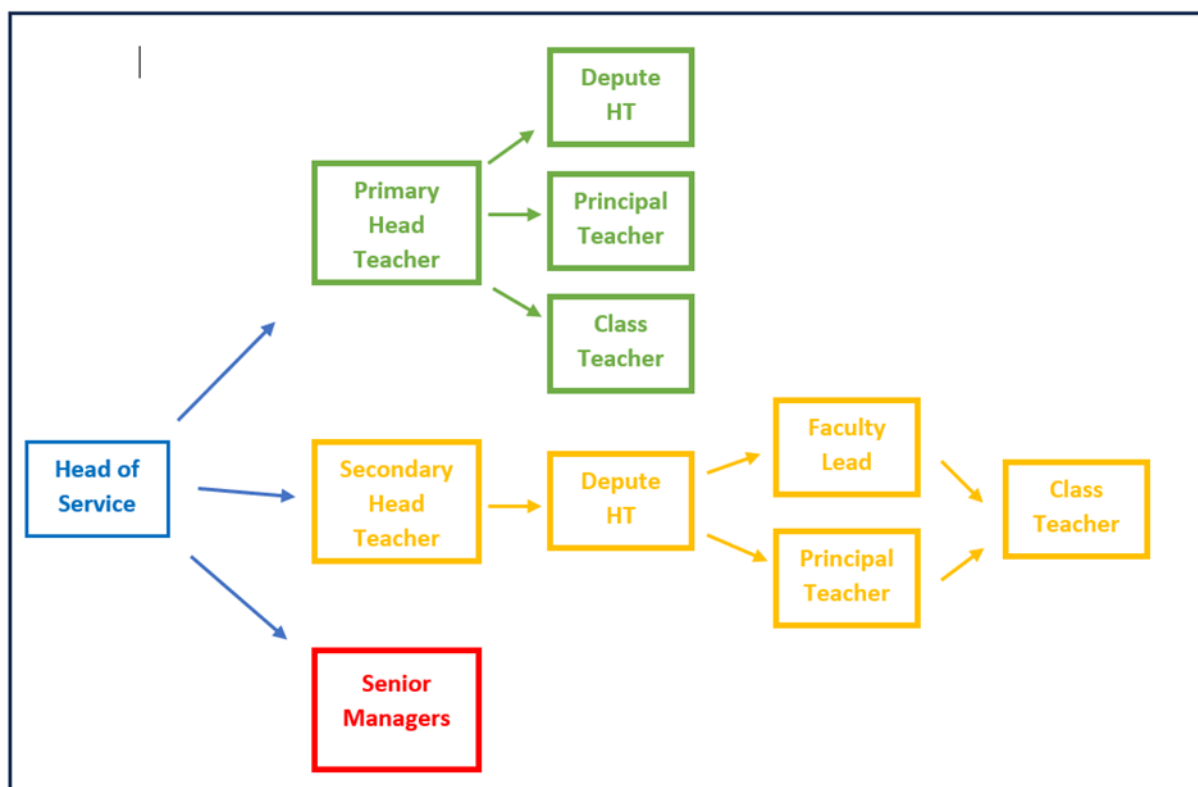
- Be familiar with the roles and responsibilities in PRD.
- Have insight into the school's culture of trust through engaging in whole school self-evaluation.
- Ensure all reviewers have access to training / have a high level of experience in using coaching approaches.
- Be prepared to challenge unconscious bias, and that of others.
- Maximise staff's professional learning opportunities to support strategic development in schools.
- Assign partnerships between reviewers and reviewees to support ongoing professional learning throughout the year.
- Take steps to remove any barriers possibly created by protected characteristics to allow equal access to professional learning and PRD.
- Prioritise time for high-quality PRD in schools in line with LNCT agreement.
- Reflect, in partnership with local authorities and employers as to whether local agreements are current and suitable.

Local Authorities and Employers:

- Be familiar with the roles and responsibilities in PRD.
- Encourage and support a culture and climate of trust through all systems and wider engagements.
- Invest in a robust PRD system which shows commitment to all teachers including headteachers and supply teachers.
- Reflect, in partnership with schools, whether current local PRD procedures are suitable.

- Adopt a robust and systematic approach to developing coaching approaches, including providing quality training opportunities for all reviewers.
- Provide training in awareness of unconscious bias, to support and challenge thinking during PRD conversations.

2.4. These responsibilities sit within a clear structure and in accordance with 'Being a teacher in Scotland' teachers are expected to make the commitment to professional learning within contractual agreed working time of a maximum of 35 hours per annum.



2.5. Care should be taken not to overload any reviewer in an establishment before commencing the review process. The head of establishment has responsibility to provide a timeframe for PRD review completion and to manage this.

2.6. In the case of reviewees having more than one line manager with equal responsibility for their remit, the head teacher should liaise with potential reviewers and assign one to each reviewee as appropriate.

2.7. All those conducting PRDs must ensure that they are cognisant of the following:

- knowledge and understanding of North Ayrshire Council's PRD process for teaching staff.
- knowledge and understanding of the roles and responsibilities involved in the PRD process.
- understanding of how the relevant GTCS Standards relate to the PRD process.

- knowledge and understanding of how to begin and maintain a professional development portfolio, preferably on Gateway.
- knowledge and understanding of effective coaching techniques.

3. The PRD Process

3.1. PRD must be viewed as an on-going process in schools and an entitlement to all teachers and associated professionals. Explicit connections between PRD, the Professional Standards, the school improvement planning cycle and collegiate activities should be clearly visible and transparent for all.



4. PRD Guidelines

- 4.1. These guidelines are designed to support the development of cultures that foster teacher agency, promote teacher-led professional learning, and enable collaborative professionalism in line with the suite of GTCS Professional Standards which underpin 'Being a teacher in Scotland.'
- 4.2. Throughout the year there should be opportunities for formal and informal, ongoing professional dialogue that will help teachers self-reflect, challenge their thinking, and clarify actions to be taken.

5. PRD Discussion Agenda

- 5.1. Based on the GTCS Professional Standards, [the PRD form](#) is appropriate for all teaching staff, middle leaders, and Head Teachers.

5.2. It should also be noted, however, that the PRD discussion and coaching conversation is key to a successful PRD procedure – the completion of the PRD Discussion Agenda is to support the discussion and to prepare for this as detailed below.

6. PRD Process Timescales

6.1. A summary of the timescales for the PRD process.

Timescale	Action
At least 4 weeks before PRD discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reviewer to arrange date, time, and venue for PRD
At least 1 week before PRD Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reviewer views the completed Self Evaluation, the previous PRD form, and any relevant MyGTCS or Gateway downloads. ○ Reviewee provides the completed PRD Discussion Agenda (if using) to the Reviewer
Day of meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reviewer takes the completed PRD discussion agenda, and key messages from the information on MyGTCS or Gateway (self-evaluation, previous PRD and PL record)
During the meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Both follow the agenda ○ Reviewer uses a coaching approach (listening, asking open questions) ○ If reviewer wishes, then they can use the GROW process to support the reviewee with one or more priorities ○ Reviewee completes the record of meeting
After meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reviewee updates the record of meeting on MyGTCS or Gateway. ○ Reviewer signs-off the PRD record on My GTCS or Gateway.

7. Teacher's Preparation

- 7.1. Note: the term 'teacher' will be used to refer to the teaching member of staff being reviewed, regardless of role. The term 'line manager' will be used to refer to the person conducting the review with the teacher, whether this is their line manager or other promoted member of staff.
- 7.2. In preparation for the PRD discussion there are three recommended steps.
- 7.3. Firstly, self-evaluation: prior to the PRD discussion, the teacher should consider the impact of their professional learning over the past year and take some time to assess their skills against the relevant Standard(s). It is good practice for teachers to conduct a self-evaluation based on one of the online toolkit choices on [the GTCS website: Tools to support self-evaluation](#). This self-evaluation can be brought to the PRD discussion.
- 7.4. Secondly PRD agenda: the teacher should consider the agenda items included on the PRD discussion agenda to reflect on professional learning and its impact over the past year, progress towards targets, as well as planning for the year ahead.
- 7.5. Thirdly, professional learning record: before the discussion the teacher should inform their reviewer that their PL record is available to view and download on myGTCS or Gateway (if applicable).

8. Line Manager's Preparation

- 8.1. Prior to the discussion the line manager should familiarise themselves with the PRD Discussion Agenda and self-evaluation documents and, if it is the teacher's PU year, access and download the teacher's PL record and previous PRD(s) directly from 'MyGTCS' or from Gateway (if available).

9. The PRD Discussion

- 9.1. The key element of the PRD procedure is the discussion between teacher and line manager.
- 9.2. The PRD discussion should last up to one hour and will be conducted using a coaching approach, with open questions and time to reflect on strengths, achievements, development needs and actions to be taken. The coaching model GROW, as shown in the 'NACEdInform' Professional Review and Development and Professional Update, may be used to explore elements of the reviewee's Professional Learning intentions for the following year. Other coaching tools may also be applicable.
- 9.3. The PRD discussion should be focused on the following:

Reflective Year:

- review of areas of professional learning priorities and evidence of impact on effectiveness.
- Review progress made in meeting targets / objectives, and professional learning outcomes agreed at the previous year's review meeting and in demonstrating the relevant GTCS Standard, evaluating the evidence provided.
- The PRD discussion should allow for reflection on any changes to agreed actions that occurred across the year.

Forthcoming Year:

- Agree professional learning and development action plan and how these will be progressed over the year.
- Professional learning requirements and activities to address targets, including a review of career development required.

10. Updating PRD Discussion Agenda

10.1. Following the PRD review discussion, it is the responsibility of the teacher to update their PRD record using MyGTCS or Gateway.

10.2. NAC prefers professional learning records to be captured on Gateway. Records can be shared on Gateway with the reviewer. If used, the line manager will be able to see the PRD record on Gateway, confirm the information was as discussed and sign it off. The record of the meeting is confidential to the teacher and line manager.

10.3. Line managers should ideally check-in and support teachers throughout the year as they work towards their professional targets. This must not be a monitoring exercise, rather one of support. Regular professional dialogue will ensure a balanced and consistent approach to feedback. Time allocated to PRD in the working term agreement must be adhered to.

11. Professional Update (PU)

11.1. PU is the GTCS scheme for reaccreditation for teachers. This is required for teachers to maintain GTCS registration and professional status. PU is the responsibility of individual teachers who must notify their head teacher when it is their sign off year.

11.2. Engagement in the PU process is a requirement for registration with GTC Scotland and is a key part to maintaining teacher professionalism. Teachers are required to confirm their PU every 5 years. PRD is an integral aspect of PU. All teachers should seek to engage in their entitlement to PRD every year (teachers should contact Erin McLaughlin: erinmclaughlin@north-ayrshire.gov.uk for support if necessary). When this is the case, the PU sign off year is simply the usual PRD process with an additional pressing of a few buttons on the keyboard to 'sign-off' and confirm their engagement in ongoing professional learning.

11.3. To support teachers in their responsibility to complete the PU process, the local authority in accordance with GTCS guidelines will:

Date	Action
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local authority to access GTCS PU list and send a reminder notification to all teachers with sign-off during the session.
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local authority notifies HTs and Senior Managers of teachers in their establishments on their sign-off year. HT shares notification with teachers in their sign-off year, if they have not already done so.
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local authority offers supportive, voluntary CLPL on the GTCS Standards and completing the PU process. Teachers with Glow email addresses can sign up for this professional learning on Gateway. Supply teachers and those without Glow email addresses should contact Erin McLaughlin: erinmclaughlin@north-ayrshire.gov.uk for support.
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local authority continues to monitor the GTCS PU list and sends out further notification to HTs with updated details.
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local authority checks GTCS PU list and sends further reminder to HT and Senior Managers in writing.
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local authority contacts individual teachers and establishments to reiterate the deadline for sign-off in writing. Teachers struggling to access PRD/PU must contact Erin McLaughlin: erinmclaughlin@north-ayrshire.gov.uk for support before the GTCS published deadline of July 1st.
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers who have not completed PU will go to associate status as per GTCS guidance.

12. Deferral Circumstances

12.1. North Ayrshire Council recognises that there are several circumstances which may make completion of the PU Sign Off process within the designed timescale difficult, including:

- Career breaks
- Extended illness
- Maternity / paternity or adoption leave
- Unemployment
- Engagement in only occasional and sporadic supply work
- Recent change in employment circumstances
- Other exceptional circumstances

12.2. In these situations, an extension to the 5-year sign-off period may be required.

12.3. If a teacher is genuinely unable to undertake the professional update signoff process in the designated year, then they can request a deferral. They should do this by first agreeing with their line manager.

13. Applying for a PU Deferral

13.1. 'MyGTCS' is a digital portal for individual membership of the GTCS and includes an electronic process for deferral requests which comes into operation in the PU sign-off year.

13.2. A registered teacher seeking a deferral will be required to notify the Line Manager of their request using 'MyGTCS Guidance'.

13.3. Deferrals will normally be requested for a period of one year. If a deferral request is successful, the teacher will normally be expected to complete the PU sign-off process during the following academic session.

13.4. Where a teacher knows in advance that a deferral period greater than one year will be required, e.g. an extended career break, the teacher should discuss this with their employer in the first instance and notify GTCS of the planned deferral period and the related reasons. This should be done by sending an email to: gtcs@gtcs.org.uk putting 'Professional Update Deferral' in the subject line.

13.5. If a teacher is unable to instigate a request for a deferral of the PU sign-off process, for example during a period of extended absence through ill-health, the teacher's line manager or appropriate Senior Manager can notify GTCS directly of the requirement for a deferral. This should be done by sending an email to: gtcs@gtcs.org.uk copying the employee and educationresources@north-ayrshire.gov.uk for information.

13.6. The decision to grant a deferral from completion of the PU sign-off process sits with the Line Manager in the first instance.

14. Decision on PU Deferral

- 14.1. If the deferral request is unsuccessful the teacher will be given the option to complete the PU sign-off process in the designated year. If the teacher chooses not to do this the GTCS hold the right to change that teacher's registration to Associate. Teachers with an Associate status cannot teach in Scotland.
- 14.2. If teachers are leaving the profession and no longer want to retain their registration (no longer plan to teach) then it is their responsibility to inform the GTCS of changes.
- 14.3. If teachers are changing their circumstances but do plan to continue to teach (temporary / supply) then completion of the PU is mandatory.

15. PU Early Sign Off

- 15.1. The designated year of completion of the Professional Update sign-off is determined by a registrant's year of registration with GTC Scotland and follows on every five years from that point. The year that PU is due is clearly shown in MyGTCS. There is the opportunity for teachers and associated professionals to request an early PU sign off when they know that they will be unable to complete the process during the designated five-year cycle due to planned leave. Examples include but are not limited to: Maternity leave, paternity leave, retirement, and planned long term absence.
- 15.2. Teachers and associated professionals should:
 - Discuss and agree with line manager that early sign off is approved
 - Submit the request via MyGTCS website
 - Go to my PL Professional Update and select 'bring forward PU sign off'