



**Education and Learning
Service**

**Highland Local Negotiating
Committee for Teachers**

**LNCT Agreement no.35
(revised June 2024)**

**Policy and Guidance on
Professional Review and Development
for Teachers**

Policy and Guidance on Professional Review and Development for Teachers

1. Introduction

1.1 The Highland Council Education and Learning Service has a duty to ensure that all staff feel valued and are enabled to develop their skills, knowledge and professional expertise.

The Highland Council recognises the importance of, and entitlement to, high-quality Professional Review and Development (PRD) to empower teachers to be confident professionals.

1.2 This policy outlines the arrangements for PRD for all teachers (except for probationers on the Induction Scheme) and will also apply to all Education and Learning members of staff who are required to maintain “Fully Registered (General)” status with GTC Scotland. This policy replaces all previous Highland Council staff development and review policies for all such Education and Learning staff.

2. National Context

2.1 Since 2001 all teaching staff, and associated professionals, have had an entitlement to CLPL and a requirement to fulfil a contractual maximum of 35 hours CLPL per annum with pro rata arrangements for part time staff. In 2011 this was linked to the continuous process of PRD throughout the career of teaching professionals, and further to this GTC Scotland introduced the current Professional Update (PU) system in 2014.

2.2 GTC Scotland has recently carried out a review of the process, and they engaged with a wide range of professionals from all levels of teaching. They identified good practice, positive aspects and areas for improvement which allowed them to create revised guidelines which have been advised by the profession, for the profession. They seek to “support the development of cultures that foster teacher agency, promote teacher-led professional learning and enable collaborative professionalism”.

2.3 Since August 2020, schools have been expected to embrace the “Empowered Schools Agenda”, forward-thinking schools already demonstrate many of the practices detailed within this document. These are practices that have been considered, and are echoed, within the revised GTC Scotland guidance.

2.4 [GTC Scotland states](#) within professional learning, enquiry is a tool to support practitioners to interrogate and improve practice to have a positive impact on the learning of their students.

3. Policy Aims and Key Principles

3.1 The overall aim of this policy is to ensure that high-quality PRD takes place in all educational establishments within Highland Council which have a strong culture and climate of trust. Highland Council staff will feel nurtured, valued and empowered within a system that is ‘a way of being’.

To ensure a high-quality process that will see the most positive impact:

- Trust and respect will be at the foundations of PRD, and will be present at all levels
 - Individual, school, officers and employer.
- All teachers and associated professionals will share an understanding of the purpose and value of PRD and are clear about their roles and responsibilities.
- Developing career-long coaching approaches that provide both support and challenge will be an integral part of career-long staff development.
- Regular self-evaluation of the school's positive learning culture, and ethos where staff understand the quality of relationships should take place.
- Schools must be prepared and ready to engage in the process. Materials to support this process can be accessed on the [Professional Learning and Leadership Academy](#).
- Colleagues will partake in ongoing professional dialogue with each other.

3.2 The Highland Council recognises its responsibilities, both with regard to its own values relating to staff, and in relation to the entire PRD process. The principles listed below underpin the aims of a high-quality PRD policy.

These are that:

- It will support teachers from their probation, through early career, and beyond in their engagement with the formal part of the PRD Process, as well as how and where to record professional learning.
- It will be part of the induction programmes for supply teachers, Head Teachers and to certain middle leaders that have PRD responsibilities.
- It will concentrate upon impact on learning, teaching & assessment, and personal career development.
- It will not be over-complicated, and expectations will be realistic and clear
- It will focus on the commitment of both sides to a positive process through self-evaluation and professional dialogue.
- It will champion effective coaching approaches that both support and challenge.
- It will stress the importance of career development and leadership opportunities.
- It will support a process which is ongoing and include the PU update sign-off.

3.3 There are also ten key factors which require to be integrated in order to ensure that the PRD process is of high-quality for all.

These are set out below:

- Ongoing self-evaluation across the Professional Standards.
- Ongoing engagement in meaningful professional learning and reflection.
- Explore leadership opportunities.
- Support strategic development.
- Career conversations and next steps.
- Coaching conversations to support and challenge
- Offer a reflective, safe space to explore successes and challenges.
- Celebrations of success and planning for future next steps.
- Enhance empowerment and develop teachers as agents of change.
- Nurture teacher professionalism, building professional capital.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 The **Local Authority/Employer** has a responsibility to:

- 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.
- Take steps to remove any barriers possibly created by protected characteristics, to allow equal access to professional learning and PRD.
- Share current information about professional learning and career pathways with all.

4.2 **Senior Leadership Team in Schools** have a responsibility to:

- Remain familiar with the roles and responsibilities in PRD and support all teachers to remain current in their understanding of the PRD process
- Have insight into the school's culture of trust through engaging in whole school self-evaluation.
- Ensure all reviewers are trained/ 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.

4.3 Reviewers have a responsibility to:

- 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.
- 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 knowledgeable of the Professional Standards to promote reflective professional dialogue.

4.4 Reviewees have a responsibility to:

- Be familiar with the roles and responsibilities in PRD.
- Ensure to keep their GTCS record updated with regards to changes in personal details.
- Appreciate and understand the importance of a positive culture and climate of trust.
- Embrace, participate in, and promote life-long learning.
- Be familiar with the principles of coaching and have an understanding of the benefits of coaching.
- Take a reflective approach to the process, using the Professional Standards to inform the dialogue and reflection.
- 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 and keeping the reviewer up to date regarding their plan and record.
- Engage in meaningful ongoing professional learning dialogue with reviewer and others.
- Make ongoing links between PRD, Professional Learning and PU.

5. Implementation of the PRD Process

(see the attached flowcharts for further information)

5.1 The PRD process is an entitlement to all teaching staff, and associated professionals. As such, particular care should be taken to ensure that HTs and all associated professionals have a Reviewer identified at the start of each session.

Each educational establishment, including central offices, should have a PRD programme outlining timescales which ensure the effective management of the PRD process for all. Where 'school' is used subsequently, it refers to any establishment that includes E&L staff who require GTCS registration within their role.

5.2 To ensure that all professionals receive a consistently high-quality and meaningful PRD process in whichever school they are based, schools will work toward implementing the timelines in the attached flowcharts. However, schools will have a range of timelines in place to suit their individual context and flexibility will be included until LNCT 35 is next reviewed, to enable schools to trial timings.

5.3 The PRD process should be strategically managed through well-planned and effective self-evaluation opportunities being built into annual school improvement calendars and working time agreements with protected time prioritised for key conversations. Time to update or complete PRD records should come from the 35 hours allocated to CLPL and not as part of the Working Time Agreement.

5.4 The arrangements for formal PRD meetings may be affected by the personal circumstances of the reviewee. Any staff member with a protected characteristic, should have this considered within their PRD planning process.

5.5 Prior to the PRD meeting, reviewees should ensure that they are prepared for the professional discussion to take place at the meeting, considering the impact of the previous year's professional learning activities on learners and on their own professional practice. This should include successes and strengths, as well as areas for improvement. The [GTCS self-evaluation wheels](#) can facilitate this process. Reviewees should also ensure that their professional learning record is up to date and completed.

5.6 Reviewers holding PRD meetings should ensure that it is a high-quality experience for the reviewee that will support, challenge and encourage genuine self-evaluation upon the impact of their professional learning, and that, during the discussion, appropriate focus and time is given to celebrating success and strengths as well as considering areas for development arising from the previous year, school improvement plan(s) and GTCS professional standard.

5.7 Following the PRD meeting, the reviewee should take responsibility for drawing up the professional learning plan which should be submitted to the reviewer for agreement.

5.8 Once the professional learning plan is agreed by the reviewer, the reviewee should identify suitable professional learning activities, seeking support if necessary, from the school CLPL Co-ordinator or the line manager.

5.9 The PRD process should not be seen as a "once a year" exercise. Nor should the PU year be seen as a separate entity. The whole process is ongoing, and cyclical with the PU year as an integral part of the whole process. In addition, the reviewee should be updating and adding to the professional learning record on an on-going basis throughout the year. During the year of PU, it is the responsibility of reviewee to ensure that this is completed and the responsibility of the reviewer to validate the reviewee's statement.

5.9.1 Deferrals

GTCS States:

You may find completing the Professional Update process by the deadline hard.

We accept the following reasons to extend your sign-off period:

- *Career breaks*
- *Extended illness*
- *Parental leave*
- *You are a supply teacher and not working often*

You can ask your employer for a deferral.

You should request your deferral at the start of your PU sign-off year.

We usually grant deferrals for 1 year.

If a registrant is unable to complete the process in the designated year, then they will have the opportunity to request a deferral. They should make this request to their employer/local authority who will notify GTCS of their decision (via MyGTCS where this is used).

To support colleagues with their registration, there is monitoring of those who have deferred to ensure that there is a process in place to have a conversation with the teacher the following August i.e. to ensure that there is engagement right at the start of the new school session.

5.9.2 When teachers indicate that they want to go onto the supply register at the point of retiring there is an option for their PU year to be brought forward.

6. Reviewer/Reviewee: Failure to Agree

6.1 It is possible that, at times, there may be disagreement between a reviewee and reviewer in connection with the sign-off of an annual PRD plan or record or in relation to the sign-off of the GTCS PU process. Where an issue cannot be resolved between the reviewee and reviewer, an appeal can be made in accordance with the undernoted procedures.

- The reviewee appealing should approach a senior manager in the establishment (or relevant education and learning officer if the reviewer is a Head Teacher) and set out in writing the reasons for appealing.
- Once the senior manager has considered all the relevant facts relating to the appeal, he or she will arrange to meet with the reviewer and reviewee (separately and/or together) to discuss the matter, following which the senior manager will come to a decision.
- Following the decision of the senior manager, appropriate action will be taken, e.g. amendment to plan or record.

- If, following the decision of the senior manager, the matter remains unresolved, the reviewee may choose to initiate a grievance under the Council’s Grievance Procedures.

6.2 It should be noted that an appeal should focus on either one of the two areas outlined in paragraph 6.1, i.e. in connection either with the sign-off of an annual PRD plan or record or in relation to the sign-off of the GTCS PU process.

7. Monitoring and Evaluation

7.1 As part of the arrangements for quality assurance, Area Teams and HC Senior Lead Managers will discuss with Head Teachers the implementation of the PRD process and monitor its progress.

7.2 School CLPL Co-ordinators will monitor the process in school together with the maintenance of viable CLPL opportunities and records. The processes associated with PRD and CLPL should be an integral part of the school self- evaluation process. The appropriate senior officer will monitor the process as part of their on-going dialogue with schools.

7.3 Views will be gathered annually from staff for whom it is their PU year to ascertain as to the appropriateness of practice.

Signed on behalf of The Highland Council		Signed on behalf of the Teachers’ Side	
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Designation	Joint Secretary LNCT	Designation	Joint Secretary LNCT
Date	5 June 2024	Date	5 June 2024