



GENERAL TEACHING COUNCIL

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT Advice to Government - December 2000

1. Introduction

1.1 An entitlement to professional development should enable all teachers to enhance their professional knowledge and pedagogic practice in order to:

- raise standards of achievement for all pupils
- manage change
- pursue their own personal and professional development.

1.2 Continuing Professional Development must enable the individual teacher to build her or his skills profile and support career progression at the points when it is needed, while remaining focused on contributing to pupils' social and academic development. An entitlement model is crucial so that teaching can compete with the best of other professions' and business' commitments to CPD and recruit and retain the most capable and motivated individuals. Entering the profession, a teacher should have a clear expectation of continuing, relevant and planned professional development that supports them in carrying out their roles in an individual school and develops them as educationalists. It should support increasing diversity within the profession and provide opportunities to achieve excellence for all.

1.3 The Council asserts that a national strategy is required to establish a coherent framework of professional development. The strategy we propose is primarily influenced by the views and expertise of the Members of the Professional Development Advisory Group and around 1000 teachers who met with the GTC in the Autumn term. The process of developing this strategy has been informed from the start by discussions with the Teacher Associations and the Subject and Specialist Associations. Our thinking is also influenced by what works in securing continuing professional development in other professions and by international comparison.

2. Principles for a professional development strategy for the teaching profession

- 2.1 All teachers should be entitled to consistent and relevant professional development throughout their professional lives
- 2.2 Professional development should encompass a view of teachers not only as classroom experts and leaders, but also as members of a broader professional community, and as individuals embarked on a career.
- 2.3 Professional development should offer more than the accumulation of specific technical skills and knowledge and the opportunity to demonstrate competence against standards. It should enable teachers to play an informed and active role in defining the enterprise of education and the work of teaching and to influence developments in education outside their school. This requires a different definition and organisation of learning opportunities which include but are not limited to training.
- 2.4 Professional development should take account of the complexity of local contexts of teaching and the experience of teachers - their individual and institutional histories, practices, and circumstances - in a way that some training which is 'context-independent' and 'one size fits all' cannot. Teachers, and others with whom they work, need the latitude to invent local solutions to professional development and to discover and develop practices that embody their professional values and principles.
- 2.5 Professional development should enable teachers to employ the techniques and perspectives of inquiry to interrogate their own beliefs and institutional patterns of practice. Professional development experiences need to engage teachers collectively, as well as individually. Through studying classroom practices professional development should influence systemic and organizational development.
- 2.6 Professional Development needs to respond to the demands of professional challenges whether they take place at local or national level. In this context, thinking and practice on subject standards, curriculum content, classroom organisation and other aspects of learning, needs to be constantly reviewed by teachers themselves, along with other partners.
- 2.7 Professional development should enable teachers to realise diversity and equity in individual classrooms by identifying and implementing classroom practices that result in an equal opportunity for all to learn and achieve.

- 2.8 New modes of professional development should be developed to address new knowledge and learning styles. In particular, professional development opportunities should enable teachers to learn about new technologies and how they can support pupils' learning.
- 2.9 Professional development opportunities should be wider than those which arise from the performance management arrangements alone.
- 2.10 Accreditation of professional development activity, where appropriate, should acknowledge achievement and learning which arises from the full range of CPD activity.

3. Equal Opportunities within the strategy

- 3.1 The General Teaching Council asserts that any professional development strategy and framework must be underpinned by all the equal opportunities dimensions of an entitlement to professional development.
- 3.2 This will mean that the strategy should:
- ensure access for teachers with a variety of care responsibilities and work-life balances
 - ensure access for part-time, full-time, supply and centrally-employed teachers
 - support the retention of all teachers in the profession regardless of career stage or career aspiration
 - support diversity in making the profession an attractive recruitment option for all aspiring teachers from all socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds to enter the profession
 - ensure access for teachers who do not wish to pursue a leadership or management route but to diversify and deepen their expert subject matter and pedagogic knowledge and practice
 - ensure access to professional development which supports diversity in the classroom and in the curriculum
 - ensure access to professional development which addresses the achievement of all pupils.

4. Entitlement to professional development

- 4.1 The GTC asserts that a well-defined entitlement to professional development should be the basis of teachers' access to career, personal and professional development and growth.
- 4.2 Beginning with initial teacher training, professional development should continue after the award of QTS. Entitlement should build on the guarantee of access to professional development already within the induction year. It must be a **career long and sustained guarantee** so that access is far less dependent on the culture and

circumstances of individual schools and the periodic provision of training according to national priorities than it is at present.

4.3 Entitlement to professional development means teachers have:

- access to a full range of development activity at a time and in a form appropriate to teachers' care responsibilities and work/life balance
- the opportunity for building and sharing expertise, participation in professional development activity and training within the school year
- opportunities to develop the deep knowledge and values of professionalism which are more than technical competence
- access to a range of CPD activity within the working year, which involves teachers centrally in its design and direction and evaluation, including :
 - training for the implementation of new initiatives
 - courses, including those which are award bearing
 - learning in teams and with a more experienced teacher
 - in-depth peer exchange/review of knowledge and skills within and across schools
 - policy and project development in and beyond school
 - research, critical enquiry and investigation
 - distance or 'virtual' learning
 - specialist, pedagogical and subject knowledge enrichment opportunities
 - extended opportunities such as sabbatical, secondment or exchange programmes
 - advice, support and information, and needs identification before and during professional development
 - specialist teacher, school, local, national and international networks and learning communities and other sources of expertise
- access to high quality arrangements for provision which may involve collaboration between a wide range of providers including teachers associations and Higher Education Institutions
- the opportunity to offer expertise to and learn from business, the voluntary sector and other professions
- access to a framework of development planning at school, key stage or department level which could be the means and opportunity to develop individual professional development plans and records.

5. Why have a strategic approach?

- 5.1 The current position in relation to the professional development of teachers has grown over time in an ad hoc way with different layers of resource being introduced to meet different imperatives. The identification of national priorities for raising standards has, in recent years, enhanced the total spend on CPD while directing it at

nationally determined development opportunities. The latest reshaping and enhancement of the Standards Fund increases the potential investment at school level to meet school development needs and support performance management. The Council believes that a further rebalancing is required to support individual responsibility and entitlement to continual improvement.

5.2 Council therefore asserts that the aims of the strategy should be to:

- achieve a more comprehensive investment in teaching in order to invest in learning and achievement for all
- actively engage the profession in the transformation of teaching and learning for the future
- make teaching a more attractive and competitive career option
- create the conditions for all schools to flourish as professional learning communities.

5.3 Resources should be allocated in such a way that teachers can realise their individual responsibility and entitlement to professional development. Resourcing of the professional development strategy should cover:

- funding teacher time
- building the capacity for effective management of time for professional development
- building the capacity of all schools to become professional learning communities so that teachers learn from each other
- ensuring the quality and extent of the provision of opportunities beyond the school (including access to online learning).

6. Proposals

6.1 The Early Years of Teaching

The Council believes that an entitlement to learning and development time for every teacher in their second and third years of teaching should be established as a priority. The benefits of new entrants learning from one another and from more experienced colleagues should become one of the norms of professionalism. Entitlement to extended professional development time in the early years of teaching will:

- improve teaching and learning
- support a culture of extended professionalism in schools
- support retention.

6.2 The focus for these early years of professional development should be on engaging the individual teacher in reflection and action on pedagogy, the quality of learning, setting targets and high expectations, equal opportunities, planning, assessment and monitoring, curriculum and subject knowledge, and classroom

management. This would build on initial teacher training and induction and be planned according to the individual's development profile. Team teaching, collaborative inquiry, observation and demonstration lessons would be among the means of encouraging this reflection and action.

- 6.3 Council believes that a further core focus on the use of advanced technologies for teaching and learning is required in these early years. As ICT potential increases the early years of professional development should take on this additional focus. This will engage teachers, as soon as they enter the profession, in virtual networks for their own learning, in understanding and applying the potential of advanced technologies for learning, evaluating the impact of ICT and in the development of content for the digital curricula.
- 6.4 Funding should allow for a minimum number of hours each year to engage in early professional development within a clear framework of learning and development objectives. Documenting professional development activities during these first years can form the basis of a career long record.
- 6.5 The Council recommends that the GTC work with the DfEE in the first and subsequent years of the programme, to identify the most effective uses of early professional development time. This work would take account of the findings from the DfEE's current evaluation of what has worked best in the induction arrangements and the insights gained in the Professional Development of Beginning Teachers programme in Northern Ireland.

6.6 Career professional development

There is evidence to suggest that sabbatical leave within the working year will foster teachers' professional and personal growth and reduce the risk of early exit from the profession of capable and committed teachers. Sabbatical leave should be focused on achieving positive outcomes for pupils, the teacher and the school. Sabbaticals as conceived by the GTC are distinct from career breaks since they are funded opportunities to work beyond the individual's school or classroom. Sabbaticals are an opportunity to gain pedagogic, leadership or management inspiration and should have a direct impact on return.

- 6.7 The Council recommends that new opportunities for experienced teachers to take extended non-teaching secondments and sabbaticals should be funded within the working year.
- 6.8 Short secondments might allow teachers to spend time in another school where there is recognised teacher or school-wide expertise in a particular subject, style or aspect of teaching and learning. Time in other educational institutions working on curriculum development,

policy or project innovation should also be among the opportunities available.

6.9 Sabbaticals might be taken as work placements in business, voluntary sector or national, regional or local education bodies or equality bodies; community outreach projects; materials or subject knowledge development with, for example, subject or specialist associations; teacher in residency opportunities; training roles and other work in higher education; accredited study relevant to the teacher's phase or subject or teaching context. Any sabbatical programme should include time for reflection on the experience. There should be an expectation that schools and teachers returning from sabbaticals plan and evaluate how teachers' experiences impact on the whole school.

6.10 ICT based development opportunities

ICT is fundamental to the development of future professional expertise. Professional development opportunities must contribute to enhancing teachers' skills, understanding and application of ICT both to support their own learning needs and those of their pupils. Any CPD strategy must take account of the potential of ICT to offer professional development through the dissemination of best practice, building underpinning networks of teachers and creating new virtual learning communities. This might be supported by funding to create and sustain web-based networks for teaching and learning.

6.11 The GTC itself will provide activities for enhancing teaching and learning through and with ICT which will place professional development online. It is also exploring with the BBC and other media organisations the possibilities and implications of the digital curriculum.

6.12 Use of professional development time

In addition, the Council recommends that the GTC work with the profession, the Teacher Associations, the National College for School Leadership and Government to identify and disseminate a range of models for the effective management and use of time for professional development. It is expected that the identified good practice will produce models for different settings and circumstances which include:

- learning from and with colleagues
- building a process of systematic inquiry and innovation which is directly related and influential to classroom practice
- working with HE partners and others facilitating learning and development
- integrating ICT based learning and development
- planning individual development so that it is coherent with school development.

6.13 The role of schools in professional development

The Council recommends that the General Teaching Council work with the whole profession, DfEE and the National College of School Leadership to identify the characteristics and conditions of schools which function most effectively as professional learning communities. Further work will need to be done to build the support for the development of these characteristics and conditions into the national strategy.

6.14 Provision and support

The Council recommends that support for the development of external provision encourages:

- regional and local access to high quality provision
- appropriate diversity of provision
- building the capacity of HEI and other providers to work in partnership with schools and teams of teachers
- meeting quality criteria including adherence to the Code of Practice for Providers and other teacher led quality assurance mechanisms which the GTC will consider developing.

6.15 The Council asserts that a whole new approach for teachers' access to professional development is necessary and should be developed as a core part of the strategy. Teachers' professional development is often inhibited by their concern about leaving their classrooms and pupils. Early work should be done on considering models for time management and supernumerary arrangements.

6.16 Evaluation

The Council considers that there should be a strong evaluation strand to the national strategy which the General Teaching Council should play a key role in shaping. Evaluation might include:

- evaluating the combined effects of current provision, such as national training initiatives, grants, bursaries and sabbaticals, on the quality, accessibility and distribution of professional development opportunities for teachers
- exploring the impact of such provision on different groups of teachers (by sector, subject area, stage of career, etc.) and examining the equal opportunities implications
- inviting a 'round-table' of experts to design and apply a model for assessing cost-effectiveness.