



The Church of Scotland (SCE)

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Official Response

SUBJECT: CONSULTATION ON THE REVISION OF THE
PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS
REQUESTED BY: GENERAL TEACHING COUNCIL SCOTLAND
REFERENCE: OR-017 - 2012
DATE: 30 October 2012
SUBMITTED BY: DAVID MCTAGGART FOR THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND,
STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Dear Sirs

The Church of Scotland, Standing Committee on Education (SCE) welcomes the opportunity to respond to this consultation and while we believe that values have always been present in the teaching profession, it is good to see them being made explicit.

We agree that the changing and dynamic environment of education and of society does mean that the teaching profession should have a moral imperative to secure the best learning opportunities and have a positive impact on learners and learning.

We would encourage the GTCS to engage with organisations experienced in articulating values and The Church of Scotland (SCE) would be happy to be involved to assist in the process of producing the final draft.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if any clarification is required and if we can be of further assistance please let us know.

Introduction

Q1 How clear is this description of the reasons for introducing revised standards and of their content?*

Q1

The Church of Scotland (SCE) welcomes the recommendation by *Teaching Scotland's Future* to revise standards and believes the reasons given are appropriate and clear

Values

For the first time, the same values are replicated across each standard, in recognition that these are the same for all teachers, irrespective of experience and stage in career.

Q2 Does the values section in each standard include the appropriate values for the teaching profession in Scotland?*

Q2

The Church of Scotland (SCE) believes that these values have always been present in the teaching profession. It is good to see them being made explicit.

While this new emphasis on Professional Values and their place near the start of each Standard is welcomed, clarification is needed around the following questions:

- Is the definition of values adequate?
- Is it inclusive?
- Where do these values come from?
- Whose values are they?
- Is the order correct?
- Are they all values?
- What (educational) philosophy lies behind these values?
- How should teachers resolve any differences between personal and professional values?

The potential impact of this restating of professional values should not be underestimated. One definition of education is “The transmission of what is valued from one generation to another” so any restatement of values will have consequences, planned and unforeseen. For example it could influence a Head Teacher with a non-religious world view engaging with Chaplains leading Religious Observance, or a teacher with a religious world view delivering subject content with a moral dimension. Clarity of the values would help this conversation.

The Church of Scotland (SCE) would encourage the GTCS to engage with organisations experienced in articulating values before producing the final draft in November. The Church of Scotland (SCE) would be happy to be included in this process of clarifying Professional Values.

Leadership

Leadership is explicit across the Professional Standards, with a focus on teacher leadership, leadership for learning and building leadership capacity in others.

Q3 How effectively does the framework of standards reflect the development of leadership qualities in teachers?*

Q3

The Church of Scotland (SCE) does not feel that the framework effectively reflects the development of leadership qualities in teachers. Leadership should be about teachers mutually enthusing and inspiring each other to become better at what they do – sharing their strengths and working together. However, the emphasis on the formal roles of Headteacher and Middle leadership could be interpreted as detracting from the role of the dedicated practitioner whose focus is on excellence in the classroom and who therefore does have a formal leadership role. Should there not be greater recognition of the value of more collegiate approaches? The departure of the role of chartered teacher makes this more challenging and is a matter of significant regret for the Standing Committee on Education.

Sustainability

Learning for sustainability has been embedded within the framework in order to support teachers in embracing and promoting principles and practices of sustainability in all aspects of their work.

Q4 How effectively does the framework of standards reflect the importance of learning for sustainability?*

Q4

The Church of Scotland (SCE) believes that this is a commendable approach. However not enough consideration is given to recognising the worth of self-improving teachers. This kind of improvement is sustainable, rigorous and meaningful and results in real change, all the more welcome now that there is no longer a senior teacher nor a chartered teacher grade. The values which inspire professional self and peer development need to be made more explicit than this

reference to sustainability which is valuable but vague and will be interpreted in various ways by different groups.

The Standards for Registration

The Standards for Registration incorporate the Standard for Provisional Registration and the Standard for Full Registration, with professional actions detailed at two levels.

Q5 Is it useful to have these two standards within the one document?*

Q5

The Church of Scotland (SCE) is of the opinion that combining both into a single Standard with two levels of actions is useful as it illustrates how teachers may embark on their professional journey of development. However care should be taken not to impose a progressive model on the already strained vocabulary or to produce a “tick-list” of what must be done to show progression. Illustrations would be more useful.

Q6 How effectively do these two standards articulate the progression from Initial Teacher Education to the early phase of a registered teacher's career?*

Q6

The Church of Scotland (SCE) is of the opinion that the concept of progression is effectively articulated. Again care should be taken not to impose a progressive model on the vocabulary or to produce a “tick-list” of what must be done to show progression. Illustrations would be more useful in our opinion.

Q7 How appropriate are the benchmarks and assessment provided by the Standards for Registration in order to award related qualifications and registration?*

Q7

Teachers embarking on related qualifications and registration will find the Standards appropriate. However the views of organisations awarding such qualifications and Initial Teacher Education should be sought and heeded.

The Standard for Career Long Professional Learning

The Standard for Career Long Professional Learning provides a framework for experienced teachers to develop and advance practice as they progress throughout their careers.

Q8 How effectively does the Standard for Career Long Professional Learning meet the needs of experienced teachers to develop practice?*

Q8

The Church of Scotland (SCE) is of the opinion that this new Standard is very welcome and in some small ways fills the gap left by the chartered teacher programme. It points to a self and peer development model which articulates well with the professional values at the heart of Scottish education. The new Standard partially addresses our concerns about the sustainability of professional development in the current economic climate. However to be very effective the question of resourcing career long professional learning needs to be addressed more robustly.

Q9 Would five years after gaining the Standard for Full Registration be an appropriate time for teachers to consider their development against the Standard for Career Long Professional Learning?*

Q9

It is the view of The Church of Scotland (SCE) that this might be appropriate for guidance but there is so much individual variation. For some it may be necessary to observe one cohort of young people from entry to exit from the school ie six years while for others this may not be necessary and five years would be too short a period. More flexibility is needed around the figure of 5 years.

The Standards for Leadership and Management

The Standards for Leadership and Management incorporates the Standard for Middle Leadership and the Standard for Headship.

Q10 How helpful is the introduction of a Standard for Middle Leadership?*

Q10

The Church of Scotland (SCE) believes that this new Standard is helpful. If leadership is indeed to be encouraged and recognised throughout schools then this Standard goes some way in doing that. However more work remains to be done in harmonising the various Leadership Standards and clarifying study and career pathways for teachers and training providers.

Q11 How effectively do these standards articulate the progression from Middle Leadership to Headship and beyond?

Q11

Does this quite well but The Church of Scotland (SCE) believes that more work remains to be done in harmonising the various Leadership Standards and clarifying study and career pathways for teachers and training providers.

Additional Questions

Q12 These standards have been developed to support the professional learning of teachers. How suitable are they in supporting the development of educational professionals more widely, for example in the area of Professional Update?*

Q12

The Church of Scotland (SCE) is of the view that these Standards are a suitable beginning to the process of introducing Professional Update. This is not a new concept to the profession although the term has provoked some criticism and therefore needs to be carefully articulated. While the variety of uses for the Standards have been listed in section 5 of the Introduction, great care will need to be taken to ensure these Standards are not seen as a tick-list for Professional Update. Recently the curriculum has been liberated by Curriculum for Excellence to follow the learning needs of pupils. Now Professional Update needs to be liberated from the Standards to follow the learning needs of teachers.

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