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Letter to Headteachers of Independent Schools

17 September 2021

Dear Colleague

I hope this finds you well after a relaxing summer. I am writing with a summary of GTC Scotland updates for your information.

Professional Standards for Teachers

Professional Standards 2021 for teachers in Scotland were published in January 2021 and are now enacted. The Professional Standards 2021 are available to view at gtcs.org.uk/professionalstandards-2021 along with some supporting materials.

The Professional Standards 2021 now include a section called 'Being a teacher in Scotland' which highlights that the professional values of social justice, trust and respect and integrity are at the heart of what it means to be a teacher in Scotland. This roots the Professional Standards as a framework that supports what it means to become, to be and to grow as a teacher in Scotland.

Mandatory Teacher Registration

As you are aware, it became a requirement for newly employed teachers in independent schools in Scotland to register with GTC Scotland as of 1 October 2017. This was as a result of the Registration of Independent Schools (Prescribed Person) (Scotland) Regulations 2017. GTC Scotland actively supported the registration of teachers based in independent schools. The registration deadline for teachers employed in independent schools before 1 October 2017 was 1 October 2020 which was then extended to 1 June 2021 in light of the circumstances in relation to Covid-19.

In advance of the final deadline GTC Scotland undertook significant work with individuals and some schools to support teachers who still required to be registered. GTC Scotland used the information each school submitted to the Registrar of Independent Schools as part of the annual teacher and pupil census with our individual level data to determine registration progress. Based on this analysis, we understand that all teachers in independent schools were registered with GTC Scotland at the deadline date.

Transitional Arrangements to Registration

A number of transitional arrangements were put in place to support registration of teachers in independent schools. These saw significant flexibilities being established to support registration. Whilst these were intended to apply to individuals employed prior to 1 October 2017, in practice some flexibility in particular circumstances was offered up until the final registration deadline of 1 June 2021. It is not unusual for professional regulatory bodies to apply some flexibility to registration criteria to support the registration of an existing workforce before returning to existing and agreed processes. Now that the statutory deadline has passed, transitional

arrangements are no longer available. It is important, therefore that any individual appointed before 1 June 2021 and still undertaking a previously agreed transitional arrangement is encouraged to contact GTC Scotland for advice.

Draft revised Registration Rules will be subject to public consultation later in the year and we will draw your attention to this opportunity to provide feedback on our registration framework. Named School Only policy arrangements will also be reviewed in line with the broader work on our revised Registration Rules.

The Named School Only (NSO) category of registration was created as the key transitional arrangement for independent school teachers to gain registration in circumstances where qualifications to meet the formal requirements for inclusion in an established category of registration were not met. This category was only intended to be available to individuals appointed to their post prior to October 2017. The aim of this category was originally to support individuals moving towards the end of their career as a pragmatic and proportionate flexibility. In practice some schools have continued to seek NSO registration for individuals appointed after October 2017. This transitional arrangement is no longer available for new teachers.

Last year GTC Scotland reviewed the 144 individuals with NSO registration and invited these individuals to make contact and obtain specific information about the requirements for them to attain full registration. For clarity a teaching qualification is required for full registration with GTC Scotland and there are also academic qualification requirements for most categories of registration. Details can be found in our Registration Standards and Rules ([registration-and-standards-rules-1215-pd.pdf \(gtcs.org.uk\)](https://www.gtcs.org.uk/registration-and-standards-rules-1215-pd.pdf)).

We are aware that the nature of some recruitment processes mean that schools may make an offer of employment to individuals before they have GTC Scotland registration. Where a recruiting school is unsure that an individual has the required teaching and academic qualifications, they should contact us for early advice. At this point we are unable to undertake a full assessment of the individual's qualifications but can give high level feedback as to whether they are likely to meet registration requirements or where there is a need for more detailed investigation. Where 'eligibility for registration' is used in job advertisements this should be understood to mean that individuals have appropriate academic and teaching qualifications but are not yet registered. A teaching qualification is the route to entry on to the Register of Teachers in Scotland.

Stepping Stones

GTC Scotland has developed the Stepping Stones professional learning programme in partnership with Education Scotland to support the professional growth of early career teachers. This offer is particularly valuable for recently qualified teachers given the altered circumstances they have experienced while developing their early practice. The programme is suitable for all teachers in the first four years of their career post-probation. An outline of the Stepping Stones 2021/22 offer is included in this [shareable link](#).

Professional Update

Professional Update is the process by which teachers maintain their registration through identifying and undertaking appropriate professional learning and reflecting on the impact of this on themselves, their learners and colleagues.

The deadline for the professional update cohort 2020-21 was extended to 31 October 2021, in recognition of circumstances as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Information was also shared directly with this session's professional update cohort (2021-22) recently to ensure teachers are aware that the deadline for PU confirmation is 1 July 2022.

An extensive programme of the revalidation of professional update is also underway, and we look forward to welcoming our independent school colleagues to panels between September and December 2021.

Fitness to Teach

All registered teachers are regulated by GTC Scotland through its fitness to teach process.

As an employer of registered teachers, you are under a legal obligation to immediately refer a teacher to us if:

- a teacher is dismissed on grounds of misconduct or incompetence; or
- a teacher resigns or otherwise stops working for you in circumstances where, but for that fact, you would have or might have dismissed the teacher on grounds of misconduct or incompetence.

In addition to the legal obligation to refer, we would expect you to make a discretionary referral to us where it is considered that the risk posed by the teacher is so serious that immediate action needs to be taken by us to restrict the teacher's registration in the interests of public protection. Examples of such allegations would be sexual abuse, violence or child protection matters.

The majority of fitness to teach cases that we receive relate to conduct concerns. We have a Fitness to Teach Process Information Booklet for Employers which provides further information and guidance regarding the conduct fitness to teach process. The booklet can be found [here](#).

There is also further information on our website in relation to making either a conduct referral or competence recommendation [here](#).

I hope that this provides you with a useful summary of a number of key areas. I wish you all the best for a safe and successful academic session ahead. Please do not hesitate to get in touch if there anything that you would like to discuss.

Yours sincerely

Dr Pauline Stephen
Chief Executive and Registrar



**Registration Matters: Teachers in Independent Schools
Council Meeting – 24 June 2020**

Classification:	Private Session
Status:	For Discussion and Approval
Considered by Committee:	Education Committee
Purpose:	To provide an update as to progress of mandatory registration of teachers in the independent sector and seek approval of policy positions in relation to ongoing decision-making in relation to specific groups.

- 1.6 The Named School Only (NSO) category of registration was created in order to provide a route for some individuals to gain registration in circumstances where qualifications to meet the formal requirements for inclusion in an established category of registration were not in place. Initially this category was only available to individuals appointed to their post prior to October 2017. The aim of this category was to support individuals moving towards the end of their career. Individuals appointed to the post of teacher in the independent sector after this date are required to be registered or eligible for registration with GTC Scotland. In practice some schools have continued to seek NSO registration for individuals appointed after October 2017. **In all cases, where individual teachers have the qualifications to be fully registered with GTC Scotland, it is required that they do so.**

REGISTRATION POLICY

Named School Only

24 June 2020

Review Date: June 2022

4 Named School Only Registration

NSO registration was a supportive solution to the independent sector in order to ensure some form of registration could be applied within the time scale for mandatory registration. It was recognised that for some individuals in the sector, the registration requirements for full registration would be difficult to apply. By taking this action, GTC Scotland aimed to ensure flexibility in supporting the continued employment of a number of individuals. Registrants with NSO registration represent approximately 0.15% of the registrant body. When NSO was first designed the aim was to support, in the main, individuals coming to the end of their teaching careers who were unlikely to seek to undertake the further study required to gain the qualifications required for Full Registration. However, analysis of NSO registrants demonstrates that the number in this category is very small. Importantly:

**Teachers appointed after 1 October 2017 should not be seeking NSO registration except in the circumstances outlined in section 4.2 of this policy; and
In all cases, where individual teachers have the qualifications to be fully registered with GTC Scotland, it is required that they do so.**

REGISTRATION POLICY

Preparatory Schools

24 June 2020

Policy Closure Date: 30 June 2021

4.2 Teachers appointed after 1 October 2017

Teachers appointed to posts after 1 October 2017 will be subject to the standard probationary service requirements. Candidates who are not currently eligible for Full Registration, due to not having taught across the full age range and/or curriculum covered by their registration category, will have five years in which to complete teaching service that meets the requirements for Full Registration. Therefore, schools should be aware of these requirements and their implications prior to making appointments. We would recommend that candidates are also made aware prior to shortlisting.

It is important to note that there is no preparatory category of registration in Scotland. This is as a consequence of there being no route for a teaching qualification in preparatory education that is accredited by GTC Scotland. Prospective candidates to posts who have a preparatory teaching qualification gained at a higher education institution in another country will be assessed through the Qualified Outside Scotland route that is already applied by GTC Scotland. The outcome of which will likely be the award of provisional registration in the secondary education category most appropriate to their teaching qualification, with the requirement to complete probationary teaching service in the Senior Phase in order to attain full registration.

4.3 Named School Only (NSO) Registration

NSO registration was a supportive solution to the independent sector in order to ensure some form of registration could be applied within the time scale for mandatory registration. It was recognised that for some individuals in the sector, the registration requirements for Full Registration would be difficult to apply. By taking this action, GTC Scotland aimed to ensure flexibility in supporting the continued employment of a number of individuals.

Teachers appointed after 1 October 2017 should not be seeking NSO registration except in the circumstances outlined in section 4.4 of this policy.

6 Summary

GTC Scotland has determined significant flexibility is required in order to support effective registration in the independent sector. The solution to existing teachers in the preparatory sector outlined in section 4.1 of this policy relates to the treatment of teachers appointed to posts prior to October 2017. **New teachers appointed to all posts in the independent sector, excluding those contexts summarised in section 4.2 of this policy, must hold registration in a standards category of registration with GTC Scotland by the time they start teaching at the school.**



**Registration Matters: Independent School Registration
Education Committee – 11 February 2020**

Classification:	Private Session
Status:	For Discussion and Approval
Considered by Committee(s):	
Purpose:	To consider progress in respect of mandatory registration of teachers in independent schools by 1 October 2020.

1.9 Given the complex nature of progressing registration for independent teachers, Named School Only (NSO) registration was established. It is a closed category and should diminish over time. NSO is provisional (conditional) registration and the intention is for teachers in this category to work towards the Standard for Full Registration. Whilst NSO category provides job security, this category of teacher will be unable to move beyond their current school. Individuals are granted NSO only on the following basis:

- appointed to their current teaching post prior to 1 October 2017; and
- no degree and/or appropriate TQ; or
- towards the end of their career (e.g. retiring within next 5 years);
- teach subjects currently not registered by the GTCS e.g. history of art;
- teach in prep school sector and unable to attain Full Registration without moving into secondary sector due to lack of 7 to 13 years subject specific registration.

Scottish Government

4 March 2022

Dear

GTC Scotland Registration Rules

At GTC Scotland we enhance professionalism in teaching by keeping a register of teachers and setting and regulating the standards expected of our registrants. The register of teachers and its underlying rules are fundamental to Scottish education operating in the public interest and play a vital role in maintaining trust in the education system. We believe that it is only by working collaboratively with our partners that we can achieve our shared ambitions for Scottish education.

It is with this in mind that I am writing with an update to GTC Scotland's registration rules. As you know a public consultation to seek views about proposed changes to the existing GTC Scotland Registration and Standards Rules 2015 closed in January. This was a comprehensive consultation and included 22 specific questions in relation to proposed changes. GTC Scotland commissioned an external independent researcher to review the responses to the consultation and I have attached the link to the full report for your interest.

GTC Scotland's governing Council has now considered what action is needed in response to the feedback provided and has determined that there is a need for further engagement and consultation with partners. By listening to the feedback of our partners and those who engage with education, it has become clear that greater clarification and understanding of existing registration arrangements, as well as the role of GTC Scotland, is required to ensure that we develop the best solutions possible for all parts of the system. Areas where further focus is needed include:

- GTC Scotland's role and context as a body that is established and governed by legislation;
- Who GTC Scotland register and why;
- What it means to be a 'teacher';
- What registration categories GTC Scotland currently has and why;
- What a registration category needs to reflect and inform and what it does not.

The purpose of this letter is to inform you of Council's decision; the immediate impact of which is that new registration rules will not come into place from April as originally planned. GTC Scotland will continue to operate within the Registration and Standards Rules 2015. The registration rules form one of the main policy pillars for GTC Scotland and are our legal position in terms of registration requirements – essentially they outline what it means to be identified as a teacher in Scotland. There are a number of policy improvements that can take place within this existing framework, and we will continue to undertake this work.

The consultation feedback provides important information about aspects that need to be further explored in collaboration with others. Our intention is therefore to engage further with key partners to discuss specific matters. One particular matter that we would welcome further engagement about with Scottish Government

colleagues is on the potential, scope and timeframe for future legislative change. Specific feedback in the consultation has pointed to certain aspects that might be helpfully framed in legislation that may support further clarity of the place and status of registration with GTC Scotland. It would also be helpful to consider the feedback in relation to the description of registration categories and how this may impact on teacher deployment.

I hope this is a helpful update. Please don't hesitate to get in touch if there are specific aspects you would like to discuss in more detail and GTC Scotland would welcome ongoing engagement in discussions relating to potential legislative developments.

[You can access the responses to the consultation, along with the press release on our website.](#)

Yours sincerely

Dr Pauline Stephen
Chief Executive and Registrar



Registration Categories 2020

Appendix 1

Named School Only	In named independent school only whilst undertaking action to enable registration in a category above. Sub-categories to NSO: NSO (Steiner) NSO (Montessori) NSO (Total French) NSO (International Baccalaureate)	Employed by an independent school before 2017 and working towards full registration
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Agenda No 9
24-25Educ(25)12_Appendix1

New webpage: Employer information

Agenda No 9
24-25Educ(25)12_Appendix1

FAQs and registration category

What does it mean if a teacher has Named School Only (NSO) registration?

This is a legacy registration category. In 2017 it became a legal requirement for teachers employed in the independent sector to register with GTC Scotland under the Registration of Independent Schools (Prescribed Person) (Scotland) Regulations 2017.

The NSO status is a legacy ringfenced category for individuals in the independent sector who were appointed to their post prior to October 2017. It was created to provide a transitional route for individuals who did not meet our qualification requirements to support registration of those already employed on an interim basis.

Teachers on the Register with NSO status are registered with Provisional (Conditional) Registration. They must meet and maintain the Standard for Provisional Registration and adhere to the Code of Professionalism and Conduct and only be employed in the named school. We recommend that teachers with this registration are encouraged and supported to successfully complete the qualifications they need to gain Full Registration.

By email:

Dear

The NSO registration category is now closed. This means that NSO is no longer available to be applied to new registrations and it is not possible for this to be used to register any newly appointed teacher. The NSO registration category cannot therefore be used to register the successful candidate of your headteacher recruitment process.

I trust it is helpful for me to share information on our registration work which I believe provides helpful context as to why this is the case.

Trust in the teaching profession is essential to an effective education system. GTC Scotland's role, as the independent regulator of teachers in Scotland, is to help maintain that trust. We do this by keeping the Register of Teachers and setting and regulating the standards for entry to, and continued inclusion on, the Register.

For an application for registration to be granted and an applicant included on our Register, we must be satisfied that the applicant meets the required registration criteria as outlined within the [Registration and Standards Rules 2015](#) ('the Rules'). The Rules form one of our main policy pillars and are our legal position in terms of registration requirements – essentially they outline what it means to be identified as a teacher in Scotland. It is only through ensuring compliance with these Rules that we can lawfully register an individual. The Rules apply to all applicants equally and refusals to register are appealable direct to the Court of Session.

Within these Rules, 'Schedule 2 – Qualified Outside Scotland Applicants' informs how we assess applications from those who have qualified outside Scotland and we welcome approximately 800 applications from individuals who have qualified outside Scotland each year.

Charity no. SC006187

This blog on our website explains more about the qualified outside Scotland assessment process and includes a link to a web page which details qualification requirements - [Blog > How we assess registration for individuals with qualifications from outside Scotland](#).

Registration in Scotland relates directly to the qualification an individual undertakes. Where an applicant does not meet the qualification criteria, teaching experience cannot be substituted for this requirement.

As you will be aware, it became a requirement for teachers in independent schools in Scotland to register with GTC Scotland as of 1 October 2017. This was as a result of the Registration of Independent Schools (Prescribed Person) (Scotland) Regulations 2017. GTC Scotland actively supported the registration of teachers based in independent schools. The registration deadline was 1 October 2020 which was then extended to 1 June 2021 in light of the circumstances in relation to Covid-19.

In advance of the final deadline GTC Scotland undertook significant work with individuals and some schools to support teachers who still required to be registered, supporting mandatory registration of teachers in independent schools. Analysis of information presented to us at that time indicated that by summer 2021 all teachers in independent schools were now registered with GTC Scotland.

Prior to 1 June 2021 a number of transitional arrangements were put in place to support registration of teachers in independent schools. These saw significant flexibilities being established to support registration. Whilst these were intended to apply to individuals employed prior to 1 October 2017, in practice some flexibility in particular circumstances was offered up until the final registration deadline of 1 June 2021. It is not unusual for professional regulatory bodies to apply some flexibility to registration criteria to support the registration of an existing workforce before returning to existing and agreed processes. However, now that the statutory deadline has now passed, transitional arrangements are no longer available.

The Named School Only (NSO) category of registration was created as the key transitional arrangement for independent school teachers to gain registration in circumstances where qualifications to meet the formal requirements for inclusion in an established category of registration were not in place. This category was only intended to be available to individuals appointed to their post prior to October 2017. The aim of this category was originally to support individuals moving towards the end of their career. In practice some schools continued to seek NSO registration for individuals appointed after October 2017 which we granted up until closure of the NSO category on 1 June 2021 in line with the deadline for mandatory registration. The closure of NSO in line with the deadline for mandatory registration meant that the category of NSO was, and is, no longer available for new teachers.

A recognised teaching qualification is required for registration with GTC Scotland - details of this can be found in our Registration Standards and Rules and on our website. A teaching qualification is the route to entry on to the Register of Teachers in Scotland.

I trust this information is helpful and I wish you well in your recruitment process.

Yours sincerely,