

**MINUTES OF THE 21<sup>ST</sup> MEETING OF THE GENERAL TEACHING  
COUNCIL FOR N.I., HELD ON FRIDAY 15 JUNE 2007,  
AT THE EUROPA HOTEL, BELFAST**

**Present:**

|                                |                                |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Mrs Sally McKee (Chair)</b> | <b>Mr John Kerr</b>            |
| <b>Ms Aine Andrews</b>         | <b>Dr Theo Lavery</b>          |
| <b>Mr Ivan Arbuthnot</b>       | <b>Mr Brendan McConville</b>   |
| <b>Ms Rosemary Barton</b>      | <b>Mr Dominic McElholm</b>     |
| <b>Ms Dorothy Black</b>        | <b>Mr John McGrady</b>         |
| <b>Mrs Susan Campbell</b>      | <b>Mrs La'Verne Montgomery</b> |
| <b>Dr Leslie Caul</b>          | <b>Ms Daisy Mules</b>          |
| <b>Mr John Colgan</b>          | <b>Mrs Thea Patton</b>         |
| <b>Mr Malachy Doherty</b>      | <b>Mr John Pollock</b>         |
| <b>Mrs Frances Donnelly</b>    | <b>Mr Peter Scott</b>          |
| <b>Mr Charles Glenn</b>        | <b>Mr Keith Smith</b>          |
| <b>Mrs Teresa Graham</b>       | <b>Mrs Audrey Stewart</b>      |
| <b>Mrs Miriam Karp</b>         | <b>Mr Damian Walls</b>         |

**In Attendance:**

**Mr Eddie McArdle (Registrar, GTCNI)**  
**Mr Barnaby Ball (Policy & Registration Manager, GTCNI)**  
**Mr Gerry Devlin (Senior Education Officer, GTCNI)**  
**Ms Deirdre Lavery (Finance & Office Manager, GTCNI)**  
**Mrs Carol Bailie (Minute Secretary)**  
**Ms Lesley Dickson (PA to the Registrar, GTCNI)**  
**Mrs Debra Castles (Communications Officer, GTCNI)**  
**Ms Glenise Brothwick (General Teaching Council for Scotland)**  
**Mr Gary Brace (General Teaching Council for Wales)**

**Apologies:**

|  |                           |
|--|---------------------------|
| <b>Mr Joe Corrigan</b>                                       | <b>Dr Wilfred Mulryne</b> |
| <b>Rev Lee Glenny</b>  | <b>Mr Alistair Orr</b>    |
| <b>Mr Tony Lappin</b>  | <b>Mr Gordon Topping</b>  |
| <b>Mrs Yvonne McCool (Corporate Services Manager, GTCNI)</b> |                           |

**1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were noted. The Chair welcomed Ms Glenise Brothwick, GTCS and Mr Gary Brace, GTCW to the meeting.

**2. COUNCIL MINUTES (GTC/06/Min19)**

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved subject to the following amendments, in point 12 & 13; proposed by Ms Teresa Graham and seconded by Mr Dominic McElholm. The amended minute should now read:

“The Registrar outlined proposals for three additional competences relating to the Irish Medium sector drafted by Ms Aine Andrews. The Director of Educational Policy, GTC Scotland, outlined the position of Gaidhlig medium education in Scotland and the GTCS position on professional standards. It was noted that in Scotland the standards for

teaching are generic but that they were augmented in the process of course accreditation by additional guidance. Ms Andrews argued the case for additional competences in the Irish Medium sector. Following further discussion Council endorsed a generic competence approach with the amendment to the Irish Medium competence as outlined in Annex B of the papers to the meeting, proposed by Mr Dominic McElholm and seconded by Mr Alistair Orr.

The Registrar agreed that the best way forward to deal with issues raised in relation to Irish Medium sector was in the context of the new responsibilities given to the Council for the Approval of Qualifications in the 2006 Education Order. It was also agreed that the Council would work with Comhairle Na Gaelscolaiochta to identify best practice in this area and that arrangements would be made to examine the processes that operate in GTC Scotland and the Approval of Qualifications related to Gaelic Medium education. The Registrar undertook to organise a study visit to Scotland.”

### **3. MATTERS ARISING**

The Department of Education are actively seeking a new Council member after Mr Kinney resigned. A letter expressing thanks for Mr Kinney’s contribution to Council was sent on behalf of the Council.

### **4. CHAIR’S BUSINESS**

The Chair briefed members on the meeting with the new Minister of Education which took place on 23 May 2007. At the meeting the Registrar and Chair gave the Minister a strategic overview of the work of the Council. A wide ranging discussion took place. The meeting was very positive and it is now felt that the Minister is well briefed on a wide range of issues relating to the Council’s work.

### **5. OFFICERS’ BUSINESS**

The Registrar expressed his concerns about member’s attendance at Council and Committee meetings and emphasised the importance of attending these meetings.

### **6. COMPETENCES AND CULTURE: A GTCNI PERSPECTIVE (GTC21/07/P1)**

The Registrar introduced this paper and expressed the importance of today when the Minister and Inspectorate endorse the Competences document, Teaching: the Reflective Profession. The GTCNI views the significance of learning and professional communities are supported by an extensive research literature and the recognition within that literature that meaningful change requires the internationalisation of ideas, a willingness to take risks, a culture that invites honest discussion and a sharing practice. One of the first tasks of the Council is to establish its understanding as to the nature of the challenges facing the profession and how best they might be addressed. The publication and launch of our competences document marks the beginning of this process. To be successful, we need to mainstream the document as completely as possible with all 27,000 practising teachers. GTCNI have met with trade unions in order to adopt a positive stance towards this. The endorsement by the Education and Training Inspectorate and the participation of the Chief Inspector in the actual launch are vital.

Dr Caul stated that because all teachers are required to use the Competences Framework it was good to have one formal document. Operationalisation across a large number of bodies is of great importance. A great way forward for teachers is through the Chartered Teacher status and development framework.

Mr Brace indicated how the competences were brought forward in Wales. In September a Pilot Chartered Teacher programme will be introduced for a 2 year period and are hoping to mainstream the programme in 2009.

Mr Colgan's main concern in relation to the Chartered Teacher status is will we have different status within teaching rather than raising the profession as a whole. The Registrar stated that we need to be careful of this and maybe we need to move towards all teachers completing the Chartered Teacher status. Ms Brothwick stated that GTCS introduced the Chartered Teacher status a few years ago and this hasn't happened.

## **7. FURTHER EDUCATION: REGISTRATION ISSUES (A DISCUSSION PAPER) (GTC21/07/P2)**

The Policy and Registration Manager introduced this paper. GTCNI (Registration of Teachers) Regulations (NI) 2004, set out the criteria to be applied to those seeking registration with the Council. In summary, these Regulations allow for persons to be registered, who have been deemed eligible to teach in a grant-aided school by the Department, and who have not been banned from being a teacher.

Any teacher/lecturer may apply for full registration if they hold an approved teaching qualification or a Postgraduate Diploma in Further and Higher Education (PGDFHE). The requirement set out in the Departments Circular 2006/21 'Qualifications of teachers in Institutions of Further and Higher Education', is that 'new entrants' must obtain, within a 3 year period from the date of their appointment, a Postgraduate Certificate in Further and Higher Education (PGCFHE), as awarded by the University of Ulster, however this is not considered acceptable in terms of a qualification leading to eligibility and registration.

From September 2007 onwards the 'Curriculum Entitlement Framework' will be introduced and will result, ultimately, in schools providing access to at least 24 courses for pupils at KS4, and 27 courses for post-16 pupils, with a mix of general and applied courses. In order for a post-primary school to provide the required access to courses it will need to enter into collaborative arrangements with other schools and the FE sector.

Pupils, therefore, engaged in 14 to 19 curriculum programmes will be taught within a 'combined or amalgamated educational environment'. The range of possible situations would include: school setting and delivery by a school teacher, school setting and delivery by an FE teacher/lecturer; FE setting and delivery by a school teacher and FE setting and delivery by our FE teacher/lecturer.

This paper set out the current situation regarding the registration of FE teachers/lecturers and sought to examine the implications, for registration and regulation, of the implementation of the entitlement framework and the emerging 14-19 curriculum.

After some discussion members agreed that current registration requirements should remain and that FE teachers/lecturers can register with the Council, if they are eligible. The Registrar indicated he will keep members informed of any further developments in respect of registration and the FE sector.

## **8. REPORT FROM THE SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS FOCUS GROUP (GTC21/07/P3)**

The Senior Education Officer briefed members on the meeting with the Special Needs' Focus Group and stated that it was apparent on the day that the SENCOS involved were highly committed professionals for whom the interests of the pupils in their care was a priority. He informed members of the informal discussion approach adopted at the focus group meeting and took members through the range of issues that were addressed.

By way of conclusion, to the focus group meeting, participants were asked to suggest two things that, in their opinion, would improve special needs provision in schools. The Senior Education Officer outlined these to members as follows:

- Ring-fenced time to do SEN administration (essentially a SENCO cannot be a full - time classroom teacher as well as fulfil their SEN responsibilities).
- Better balance regarding the placement of pupils with the final decision not resting with the parents.
- Additional resources for reading recovery.
- Great educational psychology time/support.
- Greater standardisation of procedures/interpretations and approach to the Code of Practice – there are currently a whole variety of approaches some of which may be using up valuable time.
- A reduction in workload/paperwork around IEPs and annual reviews.
- Parents should take professional advice regarding the placement of statemented children in secondary schools; it should not just be down to parental choice.
- More frequent continuing professional development on special needs for all teachers.
- Improvements to communications at all levels.

Members discussed the outcomes of this meeting and made the following observations:

- Mr Glenn stated that the balance of teachers' time in dealing with children with special educational needs is an issue. He also noted that the psychological assessment process was being used as a means of rationing resources. He also argued that there is an urgent need to reduce the bureaucracy associated with SEN administration, especially for colleagues working as SENCOs.
- Ms Mules asked how SENCOs were chosen for inclusion in the focus group. The Senior Education Officer explained the process of selection.
- Mr Colgan reminded members that we need to remember the exceptionally bright children may also have special education needs.
- Dr Caul noted that this was the second time a set of raw data had come before a meeting as it was also reviewed at the last Policy committee meeting. The Registrar noted that this was simply a report back to Council on the findings of the focus group on SEN. He noted that the DE Consultation on SEN had yet to be issued. However he emphasised that the data from the focus group would provide an evidence base to inform the Council's official response to the expected DE Consultation.

The Chair suggested that GTCNI call a special meeting of Policy which all Council members will be invited to discuss consultation once issued by the DE.

## 9. ANNUAL REPORT (GTC21/07/P4)

The Registrar briefly took members through the Annual Report outlining the work of the Council for the past year. The Finance and Office Manager took members through the draft set of accounts for 2006/07. In summary, at the end of the 2006/07 financial year, the Council's finances were as follows:

| <u>Operating Income</u>                         | 2007<br>£          |
|---|--------------------|
| Registration Fees                               | 1,186,122          |
| Other Income                                    | <u>2,681</u>       |
|   | <b>1,188,803</b>   |
| <br><u>Expenditure</u>                          |                    |
| Staff Costs                                     | 398,167            |
| Registration/direct Programme Costs             | 32,580             |
| CPD Programme Costs                             | 176,212            |
| Other Operating Costs                           | 432,665            |
| Depreciation                                    | 17,660             |
| Notional Cost of Capital                        | 10,959             |
| <b>Total Expenditure</b>                        | <b>(1,068,243)</b> |
| <b>Surplus on Ordinary Activities</b>           | <b>120,560</b>     |
| Interest Receivable                             | 30,461             |
| Adjustment for notional cost of capital         | 10,959             |
| <b>Surplus for year transferred to reserves</b> | <b>161,980</b>     |

The Draft Accounts have to be submitted to the Department of Education by 30 June 2007. The Accounts will then be audited during the summer and the final set of Accounts will be issued on 31 August 2007.

The draft accounts were approved; proposed by Mr McConville and seconded by Mr Walls.

## 10. CHIEF INSPECTOR'S REPORT 2004-2006 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (GTC21/07/P5)

The Senior Education Officer briefly took members through the GTCNI Officers' Initial Response to the Chief Inspector's Report. Dr Caul noted that these same themes recur year after year. It was decided to hold further discussion on the Chief Inspector's report until the next Policy Committee meeting to be held on Friday 21 September 2007.

**11. COMMITTEE MINUTES**

(i) Audit Committee (AC/07/Min13)

Mrs Graham presented the Audit Committee minutes to Council as an accurate record of the meeting.

(ii) Registration Committee (RC/07/Min17)

Mr Peter Scott presented the Registration Committee minutes to Council as an accurate record of the meeting.

(iii) Policy Committee (PC/07/Min21)

Mrs Stewart informed members that the minutes of the last Policy Committee were an accurate record of the meeting and briefly identified the main discussions that took place.

**13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

It was agreed that Council meetings will be an all day event rather than a half day.

**14. VENUE, DATE & TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

The next Council meeting will be held in the City Hotel, Derry on Tuesday 16 October 2007.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_