



General Teaching Council
for Northern Ireland

Promoting Teacher Professionalism

BUSINESS PLAN

2026-27



About GTCNI

Foreword

The Department of Education (DE) is responsible for setting education policy and strategy; and for the central administration of education and related services in Northern Ireland. DE is supported in its work by a number of Arm's Length Bodies (ALBs), each of which is accountable to the Department. The General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (GTCNI) is one such ALB, established under statute to be the professional and regulatory body for the Teaching Profession in Northern Ireland¹.

As the professional body for teachers in Northern Ireland, established by the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 amended by the 2003 and 2006 Education (NI) Orders, GTCNI is dedicated to enhancing the status of teaching and promoting the highest standards of professional conduct and practice.

GTCNI's statutory remit is to:

- Establish and maintain a register of teachers;
- Approve qualifications for the purposes of registration;
- Regulate the teaching profession, and
- Provide advice to DE and employing authorities on:
 - Registration;
 - Training, career development, and performance management of teachers, and
 - Standard of conduct for teachers.

Following the Education Minister's decision and NI Executive's approval to retain GTCNI, a Bill is currently before the NI Assembly to make the necessary legislative changes to enable GTCNI to move forward on a solid footing, including expanding its work in the area of regulation, to ensure that GTCNI delivers an effective teacher regulation service in support of DE child safeguarding objectives.

Our Staff

Our small, dedicated team delivers professional registration and regulation services to over 28,000 teachers annually – and assesses over 1,200 new applications – to help maintain public confidence and trust in the profession.

At the date of publication of this Plan, GTCNI has an administrative staffing complement of 15, split across:

- Professional Standards;
- Corporate Services, and
- CEO Office.

Our Budget

We are funded by teacher subscription fees, at a level unchanged since first introduced in 2006. Currently, 87% of all costs incurred are directly related to the core business delivery of legislative registration and regulation functions.

Our Strategic Priorities

As an ALB of DE, our Business Plan links to the Department's [Strategic Priorities](#) which are derived from the Education Minister's [TransformED NI Strategy](#) outlining an approach to the transformation of teaching and learning in Northern Ireland, focused on the core areas of curriculum, assessment, qualifications, school improvement and tackling educational disadvantage. GTCNI supports primarily Strategic Priority 3 – ***Build an Expert, Skilled and Supported Workforce*** and Priority 4 - ***Modernise the education system through effective service delivery, governance, planning and investment.***

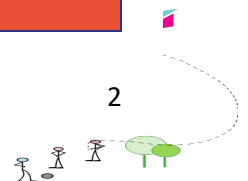
Our Business Plan outlines a series of targets and actions to deliver on these targets. All actions in the Plan have a target date of end-March 2027 unless otherwise stated.

Monitoring of the Business Plan

GTCNI will monitor progress on the actions outlined in the Business Plan at mid-year, quarter 3 and end year. This monitoring will be reported to DE who, in turn, will review and feedback on our progress.

The following descriptors will be used to report on progress made, along with evidence for each action. Progress at year-end will be published on our website in GTCNI's Annual Report and Accounts.

Year End Descriptors	Circumstances for Use	Measure of Progress
Achieved (Green)	Action has been completed in full within the business year.	Outline achievements - include the measure of success and achievement date.
Substantially achieved (Amber)	Substantial part of the action has been delivered within the business year.	Outline achievements to date, work outstanding and timescale for full completion.
Likely to be achieved but with some delay (Orange)	Action not fully achieved by end of the business year, some progress made and it is being carried forward to be completed in the next business year	Outline achievements to date, reason for the delay and the likely timescale for completion.
Not achieved (Red)	<u>Either</u> action not achieved by target date and not being carried forward to next business year, <u>or</u> no progress made on the action during the business year and carried forward to the next business year.	Outline why action has not been achieved. Might include, for example, situations where an action is no longer relevant or appropriate / where other priorities took over.



GTCNI Corporate Risks

Financial Sustainability: GTCNI budget is insufficient, is not aligned to our priorities and/ or is managed ineffectively.

Business Continuity – Cyber-Security: GTCNI has ineffective arrangements for protecting against loss of data ensuing from a cyber-attack and a lack of preparedness to respond to such an attack, leading to significant disruption in legislative requirement to underpin provision of suitably registered professional teachers to prevent disruption to the education of children and young people.

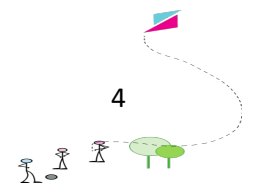
Workforce Relationships: Lack of progress on the GTC Bill impacts on staff recruitment and retention to deliver statutory functions across teacher registration and regulation to underpin education workforce planning.

Stakeholder Relationships: Ineffective education-family and wider stakeholder engagement, exacerbated by lack of progress on the GTC Bill, resulting in a failure to be able to progress critical services and initiatives to support DE strategic priorities in relation to TransformED NI.

Governance: GTCNI fails to demonstrate effective governance across the organisation and deliver against its strategic priorities and interim governance arrangements in place with DE.

These risks are contained within GTCNI's Corporate Risk Register and are overseen and managed currently by the Senior Leadership Team, with reporting to / monitoring by DE's Education Governance Team and DE's Audit and Risk Assurance Committee. At the time of publication, the DE corporate risk profile is under review with a view to publishing a new set of corporate risks later in 2026-27. This will necessitate a review by GTCNI of its own Corporate Risk Register and potential updating of same.

Business Plan Actions and Measures of Success



DE Strategic Priority 3 - Build an expert, skilled and supported education workforce

ACTION NUMBER	WHAT WE WILL DO	MEASURE(S) OF SUCCESS (ENABLING ACTIONS COMPLETED / OUTCOMES ACHIEVED)
1	We will deliver a high-quality teacher registration service.	➤ 95% of applicants will be registered with GTCNI within the established processing timescales. ➤ Applicants will then be available to teach in grant aided schools in Northern Ireland supporting DE in management of the education workforce to enable delivery of positive outcomes for children and young people.
2	We will address new regulatory referrals as appropriate within the current legislative framework.	➤ We will meet our legislative responsibilities as a Keeper of A Register for a regulated activity to ensure DE's safeguarding and child protection framework protects our children and young people and particularly the most vulnerable. ➤ We will review and address any new regulatory referrals as appropriate within the current legislative framework.
3	We will work with DE to progress the re-accreditation of Northern Ireland's Initial Teacher Education (ITE) Programmes / Courses.	➤ We will work with DE and local Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to agree a process to reaccredit the HEI's ITE programmes / courses that lead to registration with GTCNI ➤ Student teachers and the wider education system are assured of the quality of the ITE courses in Northern Ireland.

ACTION NUMBER	WHAT WE WILL DO	MEASURE(S) OF SUCCESS (ENABLING ACTIONS COMPLETED / OUTCOMES ACHIEVED)
4	We will work with DE and its stakeholders to support and promote DE's TransformED NI Strategy.	➤ We will work with DE to support DE's TransformED NI Strategy effectively partnering with education ALBs, other Departments and stakeholders.
5	We will work with DE as the GTC Bill progresses through the NI Assembly.	➤ We will effectively work with DE to support progress of the GTC Bill to secure all necessary changes to legislation. ➤ We will commence work required on development, design and delivery of strategies, policies, operations and systems to establish the structures proposed in the GTC Bill. ➤ Enactment of the GTC Bill will see GTCNI reformed as the professional body for teachers in Northern Ireland.
6	We will identify and utilise a mechanism to research the routes into teaching across UK and Ireland.	➤ We will progress a comprehensive and informed analysis of routes into teaching across UK and Ireland to inform the review of GTCNI's Qualification Rules. ➤ Applicants and stakeholders will have up to date informed information on potential routes into teaching in Northern Ireland.
7	We will identify and utilise a mechanism / process to review GTCNI's current Qualifications Rules and provide recommendations for a new GTCNI Board to approve.	➤ We will have a better informed understanding of the qualifications applicants are likely to present and their comparability to Northern Ireland-delivered qualifications.

ACTION NUMBER	WHAT WE WILL DO	MEASURE(S) OF SUCCESS (ENABLING ACTIONS COMPLETED / OUTCOMES ACHIEVED)
		➤ There will be greater transparency for all applicants to the Register of Teachers on eligibility to teach in Northern Ireland. ➤ New prospective teachers wishing to teach in Northern Ireland will have a clearer understanding of what the requirements / rules are to be able to apply to register with GTCNI.

DE Strategic Priority 4 – Modernise the education system through effective service delivery, governance, planning and investment

ACTION NUMBER	WHAT WE ARE GOING TO DO AND BY WHEN	MEASURE(S) OF SUCCESS (ENABLING ACTIONS COMPLETED / OUTCOMES ACHIEVED)
8	We will demonstrate effective governance across GTCNI, with a focus on adhering to the interim governance arrangements in place with DE.	➤ We will adhere to the interim governance arrangements in place. ➤ We will complete and submit all required NDPB business, financial and corporate returns to DE on time. ➤ We will submit our draft 2025-26 Annual Report and Accounts to DE on time and publish our audited 2025-26 Annual Report and Accounts by 31 March 2027.