

## Purpose, Role and Remit

*GTCNI is a value driven body with one primary objective, namely to enhance the status of the teaching profession by promoting and upholding the highest standards of professional conduct and practice.*

### HOW DO WE REPRESENT YOU AND PROTECT THE PROFESSION?

- Presently 55% of the Council are classroom practitioners representing all phases of education.
- Fourteen of the Council members are directly elected by teachers giving the classroom practitioner a real say in the decision making of the Council.
- GTCNI has a policy that ensures that working groups charged with helping the Council always include classroom practitioners – 50% of the membership of the working groups engaged in the development of the teacher competences were classroom teachers.
- Embracing as it does all aspects of education the Council is unique in its ability to both reflect and influence thinking in a range of agencies.

### HOW DOES THE COUNCIL DEFINE PROFESSIONAL LIFE?

- GTCNI truly represents all phases in education and stakeholders in education.
- The Council has set out in its Competence Framework both the responsibilities and the rights of teachers as professionals.
- The Council's Competence Framework now underpins all Initial Teacher Education and ongoing professional development.
- The Council must now accredit all ITE programmes before they can run.
- All entrants to the profession must have their qualifications verified and approved by GTCNI prior to being admitted to the register.

### HOW DOES THE COUNCIL CONTRIBUTE TO POLICY?

- The Council through its registration processes and teacher surveys has developed an evidence database that has allowed it to both inform policy makers and, where necessary, challenge false assumptions. Increasingly other organisations cite GTCNI data in policy documents. Note: the recent survey shows considerable concern within the profession in regard to special needs inclusion.
- The Council's current survey has brought together academics from all local Colleges and Universities. This approach adds considerable weight to the findings and analysis enabling the Council to cite robust evidence in support of policies and proposals.
- The Council brings a consistency of standpoint to its reflections and responses to policy or consultations i.e. does this policy enhance the profession's capacity to meet the demands made of them?
- The Council liaises with researchers across the UK to inform its thinking. Indeed the UK wide TLRP research findings were effectively disseminated to the profession in Northern Ireland by GTCNI.
- The Council is represented on the North/South Academic body SCOTENS.
- GTCNI publishes its own Research Reports, for example, Communities of Practice and Research Lesson Study.

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### HOW DOES THE COUNCIL PROMOTE THE STATUS OF THE PROFESSION?

- The simple existence of a professional regulatory body is the hallmark of professional status. The existence of an agreed understanding as to the role, purposes and competences of teachers helps create a sense of confidence in the profession with the general public and indeed government and civil servants.
- The Council through its unique composition interfaces with a wide range of interests and Council members and officers use all opportunities to promote the interest of the profession.
- GTCNI regularly meets with politicians, Civil Servants, Academics and sister Teaching Councils to discuss current issues and to articulate the Council's viewpoints and concerns.

### HOW DOES THE COUNCIL PROMOTE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT?

- In partnership with RTU the Council has offered guidance on PRSD which relates specifically to teacher needs.
- The Council in partnership with Queen's University and SCOTENS is currently running a project on Research Lesson Study. This project will be significantly expanded next year. Note: it is aimed at classroom teachers and is concerned with constructing and promoting a new 'professional' model of learning and development.
- The Council has been forthright in demanding an enhanced role for schools and individuals in professional development and has submitted substantial evidence to the Department on this issue.
- Via termtalk the Council seeks to provide teachers with specific materials on classroom practice,

emerging theories and targeted academic articles.

- Via the GTCNI lecture and the funding of attendance at local events the Council seeks to allow teachers to engage with issues beyond the classroom.
- The Council, in recognition of the problems facing newly qualified teachers in securing opportunities for induction and CPD, has submitted to the Department a range of options to address these issues. The Council is committed to ensuring that those teachers currently unemployed will not continue to be denied access to appropriate professional development. Indeed, it is in keeping with this notion that the Council currently extends its bursary programme to all registered teachers whether in full-time employment or not.

### IF THE PROFESSIONAL BODY FOR TEACHERS, GTCNI, DID NOT EXIST THE CONSEQUENCES WOULD BE:

- Teaching would no longer be a self-regulating profession. Control of regulation would pass to others, and the profession's contract of trust with the general public would be broken;
- The profession would no longer determine what qualifications were acceptable in order to be able to teach, resulting in a loss of control of entry to the profession;
- The deprofessionalisation of teaching, through a loss of control in relation to competences and regulatory processes (conduct, competence). In effect there would also be a loss of professional oversight of employer disciplinary processes. At present the Council provides a definitive position on issues such as competence;
- No attempt to independently survey the profession regarding the impact of government

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policies – e.g. the recent GTCNI findings in regard to the Special Needs Inclusion agenda, clearly illustrates the profession’s concerns regarding both the training and the resources needed;

- A diminution of the professional voice of teachers and a loss of the current statutory advisory role;
- The potential for an unchallenged managerialist approach to CPD; and
- The lack of a philosophical counterbalance to a utilitarian view of education. (consider the original draft of *Every School a Good School* almost all of GTCNI’s amendments to concepts and language were accepted and appeared in the final draft).

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