



General Teaching Council
for Northern Ireland

Promoting Teacher Professionalism



GTCNI DIGEST OF THE TEACHERS COMPETENCES



Digest of the Council's professional competences for teachers in Northern Ireland



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Introduction

This publication sets out the GTCNI Teacher Competences without the background detail that is contained in the main publication '**Teaching: the Reflective Profession**'. However, '**Teaching: the Reflective Profession**' remains the seminal publication of the GTCNI (*the Council*) and it should always be referenced for the underlying educational philosophy that underpins the teacher competences. This is very important as the Council views the teacher competences as developmental and progressive.

They were developed within a constructivist view of teaching and learning and, in many ways; the development of professional competence can be viewed as taking the form of a 'spiral curriculum' through which teachers both individually and collaboratively revisit the competences throughout the life course of the careers.

The publication also includes the Council's '**Code of Values and Professional Practice**' which is also the first teacher competence. Again, this is an important publication as it reflects the Council's view that

teaching is an ethical and values based profession. It is these professional values and others (*perhaps personal, religious or indeed, secular*) that help shape a teacher's professional identity. They therefore have a profound how teachers' discharge their professional responsibilities.

Code of Values and Professional Practice

The Code seeks to:

- set out clearly the core values underpinning professional practice;
- encourage attitudes and conduct commensurate with the core values of the profession;
- provide a framework for evaluating both policies and practice; and
- affirm the diverse professional heritage of teachers and enhance the status of the profession in the eyes of the public.

Core Values

Trust Honesty Commitment Excellence
Respect Fairness Equality
Dignity Integrity Tolerance Service:



A commitment to serve lies at the heart of professional behaviour. In addition, members of the profession will exemplify the values listed above in their working and in their relationships with others; recognising in particular the unique and privileged relationship that exists between teachers and their pupils. In keeping with the spirit of professional service and commitment, teachers will at all times be conscious of their responsibilities to others: learners, colleagues and indeed the profession itself.

Many of the commitments that follow are also underpinned by legislation and the profession will always seek, as a minimum, to comply with both the spirit and detail of relevant legislative requirements.

Commitment to Learners

Teachers:

- maintain professional relationships with those pupils entrusted to their care which respect the learner as a person and encourage growth and development;
- acknowledge and respect the uniqueness, individuality and specific needs of each pupil and thus provide appropriate learning experiences; and
- aim to motivate and inspire pupils with a view to helping each realise his/her potential.

Commitment to Colleagues and Others

Teachers:

work with colleagues and others to create a professional community that supports the social, intellectual, spiritual / moral, emotional and physical development of pupils;

- promote collegiality among colleagues by respecting their professional standing and opinions and, in that spirit, be prepared to offer advice and share professional practice with colleagues;

- cooperate, where appropriate, with professionals from other agencies in the interests of pupils;
- ensure that relationships with the parents, guardians or carers of pupils, in their capacity as partners in the educational process, are characterised by respect and trust ; and
- respect confidential information relating to pupils or colleagues gained in the course of professional practice, unless the well-being of an individual or legal imperative requires disclosure.

Commitment to the Profession

Teachers:

- as reflective practitioners contribute to the review and revision of policies and practices with a view to optimising the opportunities for pupils or addressing identified individual or institutional needs; and
- in keeping with the concept of professional integrity assume responsibility for their ongoing professional development needs as an essential expression of their professionalism.

Commitment to the Community

Teachers:

- promote good community relations within and between schools and across the wider society in Northern Ireland; and
- promote social justice and equality of opportunity as fundamental to community development and well being.



The Professional Competences

The competence statements have been set out under three broad headings:

Professional Values and Practice

Teachers should demonstrate that they:

1. understand and uphold the core values and commitments enshrined in the Council's Code of Values and Professional Practice.

Professional Knowledge and Understanding

Teachers will have developed:

2. a knowledge and understanding of contemporary debates about the nature and purposes of education and the social and policy contexts in which the aims of education are defined and implemented.
3. (i) a knowledge and understanding of the learning area/subject(s) they teach, including the centrality of strategies and initiatives to improve literacy, numeracy and thinking skills, keeping curricular, subject and pedagogical knowledge up-to-date through reflection, self-study and collaboration with colleagues; and

(ii) in Irish medium and other bilingual contexts, sufficient linguistic and pedagogical knowledge to teach the curriculum.

4. a knowledge and understanding of how the learning area/subject(s) they teach contribute to the Northern Ireland Curriculum* and be aware of curriculum requirements in preceding and subsequent key stages.
5. a knowledge and understanding of curriculum development processes, including planning, implementation and evaluation.
6. a knowledge and understanding of the factors that promote and hinder effective learning, and be aware of the need to provide for the holistic development of the child.
7. a knowledge and understanding of a range of strategies to promote and maintain positive behaviour, including an acknowledgement of pupil voice, to establish an effective learning environment.
8. a knowledge and understanding of the need to take account of the significant features of pupils' cultures, languages and faiths and to address the implications for learning arising from these.

* Including the Northern Ireland pre-school curriculum guideline that applies in the statutory sector.

9. a knowledge and understanding of their responsibilities under the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice and know the features of the most common special needs and appropriate strategies to address these.
10. a knowledge and understanding of strategies for communicating effectively with pupils, parents, colleagues and personnel from relevant child and school support agencies.
11. a knowledge and understanding of how to use technology effectively, both to aid pupil learning and to support their professional role, and how this competence embeds across all of the competences.
12. a knowledge and understanding of the interrelationship between schools and the communities they serve, and the potential for mutual development and well-being.
13. a knowledge and understanding of the statutory framework pertaining to education and schooling and their specific responsibilities emanating from it.

Professional Skills and Application

Planning and Leading

Teachers will:

14. set appropriate learning objectives/outcomes/intentions, taking account of what pupils know, understand and can do, and the demands of the Northern Ireland Curriculum* in terms of knowledge, skills acquisition and progression.
15. plan and evaluate lessons that enable all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to meet learning objectives/outcomes/intentions, showing high expectations and an awareness of potential areas of difficulty.
16. deploy, organise and guide the work of other adults to support pupils' learning, when appropriate.
17. plan for out-of-school learning, including school visits and field work, where appropriate.
18. manage their time and workload effectively and efficiently and maintain a work/life balance.

Teaching and Learning

Teachers will:

19. create and maintain a safe, interactive and challenging learning environment, with appropriate clarity of purpose for activities.
20. use a range of teaching strategies and resources, including eLearning where appropriate, that enable learning to take place and which maintain pace within lessons and over time.
21. employ strategies that motivate and meet the needs of all pupils, including those with special and additional educational needs and for those not learning in their first language.
22. secure and promote a standard of behaviour that enables all pupils to learn, pre-empting and dealing with inappropriate behaviour in the context of school policies and what is known about best practice.
23. contribute to the life and development of the school, collaborating with teaching and support staff, parents and external agencies.

Assessment

Teachers will:

24. focus on assessment for learning by monitoring pupils' progress, giving constructive feedback to help pupils reflect on and improve their learning.
25. select from a range of assessment strategies to evaluate pupils' learning, and use this information in their planning to help make their teaching more effective.
26. assess the levels of pupils' attainment against relevant benchmarking data and understand the relationship between pupil assessment and target setting.
27. liaise orally and in written reports in an effective manner with parents or carers on their child's progress and achievements.

Some examples of school life that the competences can shape and inform.





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