

Responding to the General Teaching Council for Scotland's Accreditation Process and Requirements Review consultation survey

March 2026



The General Teaching Council for Scotland

Accreditation process and requirements review consultation survey

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Questions

Section 1: GTC Scotland's role

Q1. If you have any comments about this section, please write them below.

Section 2: this document

Q2. Do you think the proposed name of the draft policy accurately reflects its purpose and scope?

Yes

No

Don't know

Q3. If not, please explain why.

Q4. What resource(s) do you think would be helpful to have by way of additional guidance and support?

- Teacher educators require additional support to engage with [The National Framework for Learning for Sustainability in Initial Teacher Education](#) (Scottish Council of Deans of Education (SCDE) 2024), developed by SCDE with colleagues from each of the 11 Higher Education Institutions in Scotland who provide teacher education, the General Teaching Council for Scotland, Learning for Sustainability Scotland and supported by Education Scotland as part of Scottish Government's national [Learning for Sustainability Action Plan 2023-2030](#).
- Additional GTCS Learning for Sustainability Guidance is required and should be developed in partnership, in the context of the GTC Scotland Professional Standards. Learning for Sustainability Scotland and its members and partners would be pleased to assist with this task.

Rationale

Additional Learning for Sustainability guidance and support is required because:

- Learning for Sustainability is an entitlement for all learners aged 3-18 in Scotland and all Scottish schools are tasked with becoming Sustainable Learning Settings by 2030; as outlined in Scotland’s national [Learning for Sustainability Action Plan 2023-2030](#).
- Learning for Sustainability is a requirement of all educators in Scotland and is integral to the suite of Professional Standards for teachers, headteachers and college lecturers.

‘The Professional Standards for Teachers are underpinned by learning for sustainability as a cross-cutting theme; interdependent with the other cross-cutting themes of values and leadership’

Making a professional commitment to learning and learners that is compatible with the aspiration of achieving a sustainable and equitable world embodies what it means to become, be and grow as a teacher in Scotland. (GTC Scotland Professional Standards for Teachers 2021).

- Learning for Sustainability is one of the eleven proposed cross-cutting themes in the Curriculum Improvement Cycle, and [much of the research commissioned by Scottish Government since the publication of the OECD Report into Scottish education in 2021](#) outlines the desire from educators and students– and need – for Learning for Sustainability- related learning to form part of Scotland’s educational landscape.
- Following the successful launch of the [National Framework for Learning for Sustainability in Initial Teacher Education in April 2025](#), the SCDE Learning for Sustainability team undertook a national survey of educators in Scotland. The aim was to better understand how Learning for Sustainability is implemented across a range of educational settings in Scotland.

[Significant early](#) insights based on evidence from 300 educators across all 32 Scottish Local Authorities, demonstrate that:

- Teachers see Learning for Sustainability as integral to their role. Embedding Learning for Sustainability within the GTC Scotland professional Standards is visibly shaping teachers’ practices, reinforcing that Learning for Sustainability is an important aspect of what it means to be a teacher in Scotland
- Initial teacher education plays a critical role in preparing teachers to enact Learning for Sustainability in their practice throughout their careers.

(Rushton, E.A.C., Christie, B., Walshe, N., Ramjan, C. and Sheldrake, R. (2026).

[Learning for Sustainability across Scotland: Understanding further opportunities to support school teachers](#)).

Section 3: general principles

Q5. Do you agree with the inclusion of an upfront statement of general principles?

Yes

No

Don't know

Q6. If not, please explain why.

Q7. Do you think that we have identified the right principles associated with the process?

Yes

No

Don't know

Q8. If not, please explain why.

The seven headline principles identified align with the accreditation process.

The following additions to the text are suggested to address Learning for Sustainability as a requirement of all educators in Scotland and integral to the suite of Professional Standards for teachers, headteachers and college lecturers (See detailed rationale Question 4).

These additions are based on feedback received from practitioners in schools, colleges and universities and non-governmental organisations at a [Learning for Sustainability consultation webinar](#) held in March 2026 in partnership with the University of Stirling.

Teacher quality.

'Teachers that are competent, ethically grounded [with values of social justice, fairness, and sustainability, globally aware, critically reflective](#) and responsive to the needs of diverse educational contexts and communities'

Partnership and Collaboration

'Joint initiatives with schools and colleges and strong partnership arrangements [including with third sector organisations](#) are encouraged to design and facilitate effective programmes

Section 4: equality, diversity and inclusion

Q9. Is there anything else we should add to this section to reinforce the importance of promoting diverse and inclusive teaching qualification programmes?

The following addition to the text is suggested to address Learning for Sustainability as a requirement of all educators in Scotland and integral to the suite of Professional Standards for teachers, headteachers and college lecturers (see rationale Question 4)

The addition is based on feedback received from practitioners in schools, colleges, universities and non-governmental organisations at a Learning for Sustainability consultation webinar held in March 2026 in partnership with the University of Stirling.

4.2 ..and that all opportunities reflect and are inclusive of the diversity of Scotland's population [including understanding and appreciating diverse cultures, perspectives, and ways of life and engagement in both local and global issues.](#)

Section 5: admission of individuals to programmes

Q10. If you have any comments about this section, please write them below.

Section 6: content, nature and duration of programmes

Q11. For programmes of TQFE, will this section of the draft policy work effectively in tandem with the Scottish Government's course and entry requirements?

Yes

No

Don't know

Q12. If not, please explain why.

Q13. Do you agree with the rationale for aligning the content and nature of teaching qualification programmes more explicitly with the Standard for Provisional Registration?

Yes

No

Don't know

Q14. If not, please explain why.

Q15. Does the table set out in section 6.11 accurately reflect current requirements:

a) in general

b) specifically in relation to Professional Placement requirements?

Yes

No

Don't know

Q16. If not, please explain why.

Section 7: teacher educators and programme staffing

Q17. Will having clearer expectations with regard to the attributes required of a teacher educator help select good quality candidates to programmes of ITE?

Yes

No

Don't know

Q18. If not, please explain why.

Q19. Have we identified the correct attributes and skills required of a teacher educator?

Yes

No

Don't know

Q20. If not, please explain why.

We support the requirement to have clearer expectations of the attributes required of a teacher educator.

The following addition to the text is required to address Learning for Sustainability as a responsibility of all educators in Scotland and integral to the suite of Professional Standards for teachers, headteachers and college lecturers (see detailed Rationale Question 4). This suggested addition is based on feedback received from practitioners in schools, colleges and universities and non-governmental organisations at a Learning for Sustainability [consultation webinar](#) held in March 2026 in partnership with the University of Stirling.

7.3 HEIs should ensure that teacher educators have:

- knowledge, understanding, values and skills necessary to enact Learning for Sustainability which is rooted in ideas of justice.

Q21. Do you agree with the need to have appropriate induction and ongoing professional development arrangements for teacher educators in place?

Yes

No

Don't know

Q22. If not, please explain why.

Section 8: assessment of individuals undertaking teaching qualification programmes

Q23. Have we identified the necessary attributes for the effective assessment of student teachers?

Yes

No

Don't know

Q24. If not, please explain why.

The following addition to the text is required to address Learning for Sustainability as a responsibility of all educators in Scotland and integral to the suite of Professional Standards for teachers, headteachers and college lecturers (see detailed Rationale Question 4).

This suggested addition is based on feedback received from practitioners in schools, colleges and universities and non-governmental organisations at a [Learning for Sustainability consultation webinar](#) held in March 2026 in partnership with the University of Stirling.

As stated in [The National Framework for Learning for Sustainability in Initial Teacher Education](#) (Scottish Council of Deans of Education (SCDE) 2024), developed as part of Scottish Government's national [Learning for Sustainability Action Plan 2023-2030](#),

‘Teachers are central to Learning for Sustainability curriculum making and we recognise the vital role ITE has in enabling beginning teachers to become curriculum makers who are able to identify, move between and create spaces of agency’. This should be reflected in the text:

8.2 Assessment of individuals....range of methods and measures including observation, discussion, written assignments and evidence of engagement with interdisciplinary curriculum making through project-based assessments.

Q25. Are the new provisions on managing conduct issues framed appropriately if concerns about student teachers arise?

Yes

No

Don't know

Q26. If not, please explain why.

Section 9: accreditation application, assessment and duration

Q27. Does the criteria set out in 9.4 correspond with the information required for your internal approval process(es)?

Yes

No

Don't know

Q28. If not, please explain why.

Q29. Is there any further data that we should request or steps that we should carry out as part of our process?

The following additional data should be made explicit as part of the accreditation to address Learning for Sustainability as a responsibility of all educators in Scotland and integral to the suite of Professional Standards for teachers, headteachers and college lecturers (see detailed Rationale Question 4). This suggested addition is based on feedback received from practitioners in schools, colleges and universities and non-governmental organisations at a Learning for Sustainability Scotland [consultation webinar](#) held in March 2026 in partnership with the University of Stirling.

9.2We expect that this will involve a rigorous assessment of each of the following:

- Plans for Learning for Sustainability in curriculum design, demonstrating integration of opportunities across curriculum, pedagogy and assessment.

9.6 Further information that may be required from the HEI as part of the accreditation assessment programme may include (but is not limited to):

- Plans for Learning for Sustainability in curriculum design, demonstrating integration of opportunities across curriculum, pedagogy and assessment.

Q30. If we were to bring in an independent assessor to help with accreditation determinations, do you have any views on who would be well placed to perform this function and what knowledge or expertise would be required?

Yes

No

Don't know

Q31. If yes, please explain why.

It is essential that all assessors involved with accreditation determinations have knowledge and understanding of the principles and practice of Learning for Sustainability. Learning for Sustainability Scotland and its members and partners would be pleased to assist with this task.

Q32. What are your views on accreditation operating as a cycle of activity with defined stages and deadlines? When could or should the accreditation cycle(s) take place in the year?

Q33. What are your views on the possibility of paying a fee in order to have programmes of ITE or TQFE (re)accredited?

Q34. Do you think it is appropriate for us to take action in instances of non-compliance with the accreditation process?

Yes

No

Don't know

Q35. If yes, what sort of action would you consider to be appropriate?

Section 10: accreditation regulation

Q36. Do you agree with our rationale for proposing the introduction of an ongoing monitoring and supervision function as part of the accreditation process?

Yes

No

Don't know

Q37. If not, please explain why.

Q38. Do you have any views on what data we should request, or activities we should carry out, to inform an ongoing monitoring and supervision function?

Q39. Do you think our proposed non-compliance supervision process will give HEIs sufficient opportunity to take action to meet the required accreditation standards and conditions in the event this situation arises?

Yes

No

Don't know

Q40. If not, please explain why.

Q41. Taking sections 9 and 10 together, do you think we have achieved our aim of creating a targeted, proportionate and risk-based approach to accreditation?

Yes

No

Don't know

Q42. If not, please explain why.

Section 11: glossary and interpretation

Q43. Are there any words or terms that we have not included which could usefully be defined?

Learning for Sustainability is understood as:

‘a cross-curricular approach which enables children and young people, educators, learning settings and their wider community to build a socially-just, sustainable and equitable society; and as an effective whole-setting approach which weaves together global citizenship, sustainable development and outdoor learning to create coherent, rewarding and transformative learning experiences’.

Scottish Government (2023). “Target 2030” A movement for people, planet and prosperity. Scotland’s Learning for Sustainability Action Plan 2023-2030.

Additional comments

Q44. If you have any comments about anything not covered by the consultation questions, or any other general observations, please write them below.

This response is from Learning for Sustainability Scotland, Scotland's United Nations University recognised Regional Centre of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development (<https://www.learningforsustainabilityscotland.org>). It contains a synthesis of inputs from staff, Steering Group members and a [consultation webinar](#) held in March 2026 in partnership with Lizzie Rushton, Professor in Education and Head of the Education Division, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Stirling with attendees from schools, colleges, universities and non-government organisations.

For the reasons outlined in response to Question 4 of this consultation, copied below, there was a strong requirement for Learning for Sustainability to be included in this document as a crucial component in the accreditation process for programmes and providers.

In addition, participants asked '*How can Learning for Sustainability be more visible in teachers/teacher educators'/college lectures' Professional Update?*'

Rationale

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(Rushton, E.A.C., Christie, B., Walshe, N., Ramjan, C. and Sheldrake, R. (2026). [Learning for Sustainability across Scotland: Understanding further opportunities to support school teachers](#)).

Respondent information form

Please note this form must be completed and returned with your response.

Are you responding as an individual, group or an organisation?

Individual

Group

Organisation

If responding as an individual or group, which of the following best describes your role in the education system?

Teacher / Lecturer / Practitioner Student / prospective teacher

School / Centre Leader National Agency Officer

Local Authority / Regional Officer Other (please state):

If responding as an individual or group, which of the following best describes your sector?

Primary (local authority) Primary (independent sector)

Secondary (local authority) Secondary (independent sector)

Further / Higher Education Other (please state):

We may want to contact you about some of the points you have raised in your response. If you are happy for us to do this, please provide your name and an email address.

Name: Cecilia Manosa Nyblon

Email address: cecilia.manosa@ed.ac.uk

Responding to the consultation

You can email your completed survey response to gtcs@gtcs.org.uk and put 'Accreditation Process and Requirements Review consultation' in the email subject line.

You can also print off the document and post to:

General Teaching Council for Scotland
Clerwood House
96 Clermiston Road
Edinburgh
EH12 6UT

If you need us to provide the consultation documentation in an alternative format, please email us at gtcs@gtcs.org.uk.

Deadline for responses

All responses should be received no later than 5pm on Thursday 12 March 2026. Responses received after this deadline may not be considered. Please let us know in advance of this deadline if you anticipate having difficulties meeting it.