

Policy:

Probationer Support

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1. Foreword

The successful future of a highly trained and effective teaching force is dependent on the quality of induction and support new teachers receive when setting out on their teaching careers. Carefully planned, proportionate programmes of support which address probationer teachers' needs and provide regular constructive feedback and time for professional discussion make a significant contribution to the development of new teachers' competences. Opportunities to evaluate their own progress and discuss this with a sympathetic and trusted colleague help to develop their self-esteem and self-confidence and encourage the habit of becoming reflective professionals.

West Lothian values all of its workforce highly and especially extends a warm welcome to all new employees. Through these guidelines it hopes to ensure continued support and encouragement for staff at the beginning of their careers and in the longer term. The GTCS website contains a wealth of useful information for probationers and their mentors.

<http://www.in2teaching.org.uk/teacher-induction-scheme/teacher-induction-scheme.aspx>

2. Teacher Induction Scheme

The Teacher Induction Scheme (TIS) provides a guaranteed one-year training post within a local authority to every eligible student graduating with a teaching qualification from one of Scotland's universities. GTC Scotland, in partnership with the Scottish Government is responsible for the administration of the scheme. The scheme is not compulsory and probationers can choose to follow the Flexible Route instead.

The Teacher Induction Scheme allows probationer teachers to be considered for full registration within one school year (190 teaching days). As part of the scheme, probationer teachers are guaranteed,

- A maximum class contact time of 0.8 full time equivalent (18 hours). This is endorsed by GTC Scotland. This teaching time may be extended later in the session to 0.82 FTE (18.5 hours) for teachers whose progress is deemed Satisfactory. A minimum class contact time of 0.55 FTE (12 hours 23mins). Probationer teachers have no entitlement to Reduced Class Contact Time.
- Dedicated time set aside for professional learning
- Access to a teacher for support throughout the induction year

3. The Probation Process

All probationer teachers in West Lothian should experience a structured probation process. Each part of this process should be a building block in developing their probation profile which is used to evidence that the probationer teacher is meeting the Standard for Full Registration. All information gathered throughout the probation service should be documented in the profile.

Prior to taking up their probationer teacher post, all probationers will have had at least one opportunity to visit their new school and meet their supporter in order to establish relationships. From August to December, the probationer and supporter will set up supporter meetings. At an early meeting, the probationer and supporter should set up an action plan for professional development, based on the final profile from Initial Teacher Education, and they should also begin to discuss the focus of the probationer's professional learning. It is strongly recommended that the probationer teacher and their supporter meet every week to discuss progress and to focus on the probationer's Initial Professional Development Action Plan (IPDAP).

There must also be regular observed teaching sessions. It is strongly recommended that a minimum of five observed lessons take place during this first period of teaching and development.

The Interim Profile is completed at the end of this period and is submitted to the GTCS in December. The Interim Profile must include all of the information and evidence gathered between August and December. Following submission, a recommendation of Satisfactory will then allow probationer teachers access to their final profile which is completed between January and June.

Between January and June, the probationer must continue to document their own professional development using the probation profile and they must continue to meet with their supporter, weekly if possible. They will also continue to have observed lessons and they must take part in professional learning opportunities. Information and evidence gathered from January will form the basis of the final profile which will be submitted in May / June.

If a recommendation of Unsatisfactory or Cause for Concern is submitted in December with the Interim Profile, the probationer teacher will be given access to a second interim profile which should be submitted at Easter. In the event that a probationer teacher is giving consistent cause for concern beyond the second interim profile, West Lothian Council may recommend an extension to their period of probation in order to allow them more time to demonstrate that they can meet the Standard for Full Registration. This extension is normally for 60 days and requires the probationer to complete an extension profile. In rare circumstances, the final profile may contain a recommendation from West Lothian Council to cancel a probationer teacher's provisional registration. Full details of this process are available from the GTC.

<http://www.in2teaching.org.uk/teacher-induction-scheme/tis-extensions-and-cancellations.aspx>

4. Key People in Induction

There are a number of supports that a probationer teacher should expect in West Lothian schools. These supports include their in-school supporter, the Headteacher, the role of the school and colleagues, the support of the local authority and finally, the support of GTC Scotland.

The in-school supporter is the key figure in the development of the probationer and must act as the main support for that new teacher in school. Supporters have a responsibility for helping the probationer to decide on professional learning and for providing the probationer with regular support and feedback. They are expected to:

- Establish a professional and positive relationship with the probationer
- Create an open, supportive and challenging climate for discussion
- Co-ordinate and manage Professional Learning experiences
- Monitor and evaluate progress through observed teaching sessions
- Ensure that opportunities are provided to address the probationer's professional development needs
- Provide pastoral support
- Oversee the development, implementation and review of the action plan and probationer profile
- Monitor and evaluate the quality and effectiveness of the school support programme

- Encourage the probationer to reflect on their teaching and evaluate pupil learning
- Complete, in conjunction with the Headteacher, the Interim and Final Profiles.
- Liaise with the probationer supports within the local authority and the Education Quality Improvement Team, if necessary.

All schools with a probationer teacher will have a budget allocation of 0.1 FTE to allow the supporter to undertake these responsibilities in addition to their own teaching responsibilities. This time should be honoured on a weekly basis.

The Headteacher must also play a vital role in the learning and support of any probationer teachers within the school. He / she must work in conjunction with West Lothian Council and the supporter to ensure all arrangements are in place to accommodate the needs of the probationer in school. This will include:

- Seeking to ensure that the probationer gets the opportunity of a varied teaching commitment, both in primary and secondary
- Enabling the probationer and the supporter to have time to discuss progress, and ensuring access to appropriate professional development activities
- Ensuring that the probationers class contact and professional learning times are being adhered to
- Completing, in conjunction with the supporter, the interim and final profiles

The other staff in the school and other teachers within West Lothian schools can also be seen to have responsibility for supporting our probationer teachers by sharing resources, advice and the benefit of experience. This can take the form of peer learning observations and other learning visits by the probationer teacher. This is not an additional burden for school staff but an excellent opportunity to develop less experienced practice. The school must also provide an induction pack and staff handbook which will include practical information about the school's strategic and operational systems.

For example, this could include:

- Aims, Vision and Values
- Routines and administration arrangements
- Policies and procedures
- Health & Safety information

In response to our relentless focus on raising attainment for our children and young people, West Lothian Council recognises its role in supporting and developing our probationer teachers. The Council's role is key to their success and key to maintaining high standards of professionalism and of learning and teaching within the authority. West Lothian Council provides a designated member of staff with responsibility for probationer teachers' professional development. This central officer is also responsible for the necessary checks on the interim and final profiles prior to submission to the GTC Scotland and will be in close contact with the probationer and their supporter. The designated officer with responsibility for probationers also organises the Probationer Induction Day in June. This is the first local authority learning session and will prepare the probationer teachers with essential authority – wide training in a variety of contexts. These will include Health and Safety and Child Protection. The probationer officer will also organise a suite of learning opportunities for all probationers throughout the time of their induction. West Lothian Council recognises that this professional learning also gives all probationer teachers an additional support in the form of contact and professional dialogue with their peers.

GTC Scotland will continue to support probationers in West Lothian throughout their induction year. They ultimately will decide on a teacher being awarded full registration. The GTC provide excellent guidance to all involved in the probation process through their website.

5. Professional Learning

All probationer teachers in West Lothian are required to participate in a relatively intense period of professional learning. In order to achieve the Standard for Full registration, probationer teachers must demonstrate the specific requirements in the four areas of their professional competences.

In line with national expectations, probationers in West Lothian are required to dedicate 0.2 FTE of their timetable to professional learning experiences and 0.8 FTE to teaching. Professional learning will include experiences within and outside of school and should include reading and research.

The 0.2 professional learning time could include team-teaching, collaborative working, practitioner enquiry, working with pupils outwith normal contact time and observing colleagues. It can also include enhanced planning and preparation activities. The Headteacher and Supporter should be mindful that the probationer teacher does not have an onerous professional learning burden between collegiate obligations in school and authority-led opportunities.

6. Monitoring Classroom Practice

A programme of planned classroom observation visits should be arranged in line with GTCS guidelines. Full feedback must be given to the probationer. Feedback should be recorded by the probationer in their online profile. Several means of assessment are available to schools. These include:

- Observation
- Professional dialogue around planning for learning and teaching
- Monitoring pupils' work and achievements
- Probationer self-assessment
- Observed interaction between probationer and colleagues/pupils/parents.

Classroom visits must be pre-arranged with an agreed focus. The supporter is there to engage the probationer in improvement and their comments must always include strengths and clear next steps.

7. Flexible Route Probationers

All probationers on the Flexible Route should complete an online profile and guidance is available on the GTC Scotland website. Flexible route probationers are entitled to the dedicated help and advice of a supporter. Whilst probationer teachers who have decided on the flexible route do not have the same structures for support and class contact time, West Lothian Council would recommend that schools provide professional learning supports for all their developing teachers regardless of the route they are taking to full registration. The probationary period for those on the flexible route is 270 days.

