**Scotland**

### Teacher Identities and Professionalism Research

**Strong National Structures, Support and Direction**

- Scotland's system is characterised by a strong commitment to structures and frameworks developed alongside teachers and professional bodies.
- The government aims to strike a balance between creating structure and allowing space for professionalism.
- The National Improvement Framework provides a clear central focus for system improvements.

### Priorities and Organisation

Most pupils in Scotland (95.5%) attend state-funded schools which are monitored by 32 Local Education Authorities, with funding and national frameworks provided by the Scottish government. Scotland’s education system is managed independently of the UK system, with responsibility for funding, management, qualifications, inspections and examinations all devolved to Education Scotland, the executive agency of the Scottish government.

Scottish education is organised into several stages:
- Primary 1-7 (P-7, age 5-12)
- Secondary 1-4 (S1-4, age 12-18)
- Secondary 5-6 (S5-6, age 16-18)

Scottish state schools, with few exceptions, are fully comprehensive and non-selective. There are currently 454 teachers able to teach Gaelic. A significant minority of teachers work in a Roman Catholic school. Relative to other OECD systems, it is common for pupils to be group classified into different groups or classes within classes for some subjects.

With a real terms cut in UK-wide budgets, Scotland is currently working with a challenging funding climate. The government has worked to protect Local Authority budgets and target funding to priority areas through a needs-based formula and designated funding streams in line with devolved school management guidelines.

Local Authorities then set education budgets for their areas, providing funds to local teachers who allocate this within their school. There is additional funding for priority groups and areas such as Pupil Equity Funding and funds directed towards supporting collaboration teachers. There are also targeted initiatives such as the Attainment Challenge Fund, the Schools Improvement Fund and The Innovation Fund, all of which focus at priority areas and groups of young people.

### National Priorities and Contexts

In terms of proportion of the population reaching NVQ level 4 and above, Scotland is one of the most highly educated countries in Europe and was an above average performer in the 2013 PISA results. 2015 PISA results, however, have been disappointing. Disproportions in reading, science and maths have brought Scotland in line with other OECD systems, it is common for pupils to be more prescriptive than previous models, it is designed to give teachers control of curriculum design and reduce the level of external accountability and assessment.

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The government collaborates with universities, teacher unions such as EIS, NASUWT, STAI and VSOS, and external and professional associations such as the Scottish College for Education Leadership and Management. The government is strengthening partnerships by extending the use of research to policy and practice, and increasing the supply of practitioners.

According to the OECD (May 2015), ‘real and active partnerships are a key feature of system ‘improving Education International Study’ (March 2016) suggests that there is increased collaborative work, sharing of practice and innovation taking place. Professional dialogue is being encouraged by research briefings from Education Scotland summarizing research relevant to the Scottish Attainment Challenge. Teachers report a greater focus, increased engagement and ownership of COPs and greater awareness of the range of activities that can lead to professional learning. The evaluation also reports that COPs are more relevant to teachers’ needs and there is an increased impact on pupil impact.

The GTCS emphasises the importance of evidencing impact on pupil learning as part of professional learning and the importance of not only the professional enquiry but also the range of statutory functions and initiatives to promote, support and develop the professional learning of teachers.

This includes:
- confirming teachers are engaging in ongoing professional learning against the appropriate GTCS Professional Standards,
- providing access to a range of support tools and accrediting professional learning.

### Pedagogy, Curriculum and Classroom Culture

The Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) provides detailed guidance on objectives and aspirations for all children. Less prescriptive than previous models, it is designed to give teachers control of curriculum design and reduce the level of external accountability and assessment.

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### Accountability and Assessment

The National Improvement Framework (NIF) (2015,2017) is an assessment, evaluation and improvement framework that focuses reform. New standardised assessments are being introduced as part of the National Improvement Framework. Key indicators are used to support and focus improvement with a robust and nationally consistent evidence base.

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### Headline Findings

- Scotland’s system is well established.
- The Scottish Attainment Challenge has been set up to increase the number of pupils who are performing at or above expected levels.
- The Scottish government is committed to increasing the number of pupils who are performing at or above expected levels.

### Active partnerships and increases in collaborative professional learning

- The Scottish system has a strong and active culture of partnership and consensus building.
- The government is supporting collaboration by including ‘from the middle’ – through initiatives and structures.
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### Teachers Roles, Recruitment and Retention

- The professional status of teachers in Scotland is well established.
- The Scottish government has implemented the National Improvement Framework (NIF) to improve the quality of education in Scotland.
- The GTCS (General Teaching Council for Scotland) is one of the first teaching councils in the world to be set up in 1965. In 2012, legislation passed by the Scottish Parliament made it the world’s first independent, self-regulating body for teaching.
- The National Improvement Framework (NIF) identifies teacher professionalism as one key driver of six for school improvement.
- The GTCS maintains standards for teacher professionalism listed in the NIF include:
  - Increasing the percentage having professional learning signed off by GTCS and GTCS information on teaching and opportunities for professional learning.
- According to government materials supporting the governance review consultation (commissioned in September 2016 as one response to OECD’s 2015 Report), the approach to governance will be based on the presumption that decisions about children’s learning and school life should be taken at school level.
- The government reports on the increasing number of professional learning signed off by GTCS and GTCS information on teaching and opportunities for professional learning.
- Pay rates are set nationally. Following successful completion of a probationary year, Scottish teachers are paid between £33,895–£35,762, rising with annual increments. Teachers can also earn £36,870–£43,845 with Chartered status and £38,991–£50,319 for Principal Teachers taking on additional responsibilities. Teachers also qualify for a pension based on career average earnings and benefits such as ‘death in service’ cover.
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### Professional Development, Teaching and Learning

- The Delphi Report for Scottish Education (June 2016) outlines policies, programmes and strategies for improving the impact of the Scottish Attainment Challenge, the focus which includes staffing supply and capacity, professional learning and classroom progression and development. It sets out the intention to, “to continue to extend the use of research to underpin the interventions and strategies used in classrooms to close the gap as part of our developing research strategy. This includes the creation of a national forum for academics and practitioners working together with local authorities to develop local action research based projects on closing the gap by led by educational psychologists. Similarly, a key principle in the NIF is “use evidence to inform practice and share innovation”.
- Extensive change and reforms in the Scottish education system means that keeping up to date and engaging with professional learning is of particular importance.
- The implementation of Teaching Scotland’s Future (March 2016) suggests that there is increased collaborative work, sharing of practice and innovation taking place. Professional dialogue is being encouraged by research briefings from Education Scotland summarizing research relevant to the Scottish Attainment Challenge. Teachers report a greater focus, increased engagement and ownership of COPs and greater awareness of the range of activities that can lead to professional learning (e.g., the evaluation also reports that COPs are more relevant to teachers’ needs and there is an increased impact on pupil impact. This and the GTCS standards, promote a “ scholar–leader paradigm” and professionalism.
- The GTCS emphasises the importance of evidencing impact on pupil learning as part of professional learning and the importance of not only the professional enquiry but also the range of statutory functions and initiatives to promote, support and develop the professional learning of teachers.
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### The Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) provides detailed guidance on objectives and aspirations for all children. Less prescriptive than previous models, it is designed to give teachers control of curriculum design and reduce the level of external accountability and assessment.

The government is committed to shifting more responsibilities from the centre to the local level, and was an above average performer in the 2013 PISA results. 2015 PISA results, however, have been disappointing. Disproportions in reading, science and maths have brought Scotland in line with other OECD systems, it is common for pupils to be...