

# Unlocking the Potential of Professional Review and Development

Professional Review and  
Development Guidelines 2019





# Contents

|                                                                                           |    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Context and Supporting Information .....                                                  | 2  |
| Introduction: Professional Review and Development is Key to Teacher Professionalism ..... | 3  |
| Culture of Trust .....                                                                    | 4  |
| Readiness for PRD .....                                                                   | 5  |
| Entitlement for All.....                                                                  | 6  |
| Time and Timing.....                                                                      | 7  |
| Career Development.....                                                                   | 8  |
| Coaching Approaches.....                                                                  | 9  |
| Professional Dialogue.....                                                                | 10 |
| Actions.....                                                                              | 11 |
| Key Features of High-Quality PRD.....                                                     | 12 |
| Employer Responsibilities.....                                                            | 13 |
| Conclusion.....                                                                           | 13 |
| Summary of Relevant Points .....                                                          | 14 |
| Links, Resources and Acknowledgements.....                                                | 15 |

# Context

GTC Scotland has national responsibility for the review of Professional Review and Development (PRD) for teachers and headteachers, assigned by the Scottish Government.

Data was used from the *GTCS Professional Update annual evaluations* to support this review, along with current literature to identify good practice in PRD both nationally and internationally. GTCS engaged with and listened to a wide range of teachers and headteachers from across Scotland in seeking feedback about their PRD experiences. Positive aspects and areas of improvement were identified and fed into the development of these guidelines which have been created in conjunction with partners from professional associations and other education bodies.

Accordingly, these revised Professional Review and Development Guidelines have been shaped and created by the profession, for the profession. They are designed to support the development of cultures that foster teacher agency, promote teacher-led professional learning and enable collaborative professionalism.

## Supporting Information

In these guidelines you will find colour-coded text. The key for this is:

- **Hyperlinks** are *blue*
- **PRD Key Features** are **emboldened** and are linked to the key features visual on page 12
- **PRD support resources** are *green*

These guidelines are supported throughout with relevant quotes from teachers and literature, sharing the importance of the positive impact of high-quality PRD.

# Introduction

## Professional Review and Development is Key to Teacher Professionalism

Positively engaging with PRD, using **Professional Standards** to scaffold and support, empowers teachers to be critical of their thinking and practice, and enhances **teacher professionalism** to ultimately best serve our children and young people across Scotland.

Professional learning is central to the principles of the teaching profession. If we are to maximise professional learning opportunities to support **strategic development in schools**, we must give greater importance to PRD processes. We must value and reflect upon the excellent work undertaken by teachers, capitalising on the momentum of high-quality **ongoing professional dialogue** to ensure future engagement in meaningful **professional learning**.

PRD provides teachers, throughout the year, with ongoing opportunities to reflect on their practice and personal learning, punctuated with a variety of professional learning conversations, supported by an annual review meeting between reviewee and reviewer.

When set within a culture of professional trust and positive relationships, where everyone has a shared understanding of its purpose, high-quality PRD **empowers** teachers, whether they are reviewers or reviewees, to be leaders 'of and for' learning.

This engagement helps teachers to plan for improvement and become even better. It also promotes inclusion and enables teachers to best meet the increasingly diverse needs of all learners.

Professional Standards for teachers are core to the being, knowing and doing that is **teacher professionalism**. It is these standards which make useful connections between ongoing **Professional Review and Development**, **Professional Learning** and **Professional Update** sign-off. Through actively engaging in **self-evaluation across the standards** and ongoing dialogue, teachers can become **agents of change**, develop an enquiring mindset and take ownership of their learning journey.

**Professional capital**, which includes human, social and decisional capital, will therefore grow across learning communities with teachers being recognised and valued by the profession as proactive role models of learning.

**'Educators must be knowledgeable and wise. They must know enough in order to change. They must change in order to get different results. They must become learners...'**

**– OECD, 2016**





## Culture of Trust

High-quality PRD takes place in schools which have a strong **culture and climate of trust**, where teachers feel **nurtured**, valued and empowered, and where this is 'a way of being'. Trust and respect are the foundations of PRD.

When all teachers, regardless of their remit, share an understanding of the purpose and value of PRD, and are clear about their **roles and responsibilities** within it, a positive impact is more likely.

Where there is a culture and climate of trust and respect, there is a greater opportunity to offer not only support, but also challenge, as an integral part of teacher development. Space to take risks is built in as part of this culture, where problems and setbacks are regarded as learning opportunities. In an empowered system there should be trust at all levels: individual, school and local authority/employer.

Rather than assume that trust exists, improving schools regularly self-evaluate to understand the quality of their relationships which are fundamental to a positive learning culture and school ethos.

**'Trust is the connective tissue that holds improving schools together.'**

**—Bryk and Schneider, 2002**



**PRD discussions have contributed to and enhanced the ethos of professional trust in the school as staff members feel valued by the Senior Leadership Team."**

**Jacqueline Stewart, Retired HT at Bankton Primary School**



**It is expected that everyone is a learner! At the heart of this are genuine trusting relationships where all feel valued and are given opportunities, thus creating collective teacher efficacy."**

**Caroline Bruce, HT at Torbain & Capshard Primary Schools**



## Readiness for PRD

Time invested by schools to ensure their **readiness for PRD** will make certain they are best equipped to engage in high-quality PRD.

Ideally all schools should undertake their checks every year by firstly carrying out annual 'health-checks' (see **support resources**). Working time agreements should be finalised, including time set aside and prioritised for formal PRD conversations. Opportunities should be taken to ensure all teachers become familiar with their roles and responsibilities in their PRD process, with reviewee and reviewer pairings preferably agreed at an early point in the year. Local expectations and policies should be shared so all teachers know what is expected of them with regards to local authority or employer agreed procedures. Throughout the year, there should be opportunities for formal and informal, ongoing professional dialogue that will help teachers self-reflect, challenge their thinking and clarify actions to be taken. Explicit connections between PRD, the Professional Standards, the school improvement planning cycle and collegiate activities should be clearly visible and transparent for all.

It is essential that PRD is seen as an ongoing process rather than an annual event: readiness checks should be undertaken on an annual basis as best practice.





## Entitlement for All

The profession has a duty to ensure that every teacher has access to high-quality professional learning conversations, as part of PRD. These conversations should be a **positive experience for all**, motivating and encouraging teachers to be forward thinking and inspirational. Equal access should include consideration of the barriers which some teachers may face, and what steps can be taken to remove these.

There should be equity of access to PRD across the profession. Currently this is not always the case. Two specific groups have been identified as consistently not being in receipt of parity of experience: headteachers and supply teachers.



**I am a two day a week supply teacher. The feeling of inclusion is vital. Our headteacher has invested time, energy and considerable expertise in my PRD. This helps me to feel motivated, challenged and empowered to be the best teacher that I can be."**

**Karen Woods, Supply Teacher**

For headteachers to fully appreciate and understand the positive impact a high-quality coaching PRD can have, they ought to experience this impact for themselves. Within school communities the responsibility for ensuring quality and parity lies with headteachers, however, local authorities and employers must show the same commitment to their headteachers. They need to value the professional learning and development undertaken by headteachers, recognise the importance of nurturing this group of professionals, and guarantee them protected space and time to reflect. Local authorities and employers should implement a robust system which shows commitment to headteachers, allowing them to experience a regular, high-quality, personal PRD engagement. Without this undertaking, the positive influence of PRD across our school communities is less likely to succeed, therefore it must be recognised as a vital part of the system.

Supply teachers play a fundamental role in our schools and act as lead learners in classrooms across the country. It is often very difficult for them to be empowered if they do not feel valued or listened to, or their PRD is not seen as a priority. Whilst supply teachers themselves should be proactive in their engagement with the process, **local authorities and employers** should now take the opportunity to review their current systems to ensure that all teachers are considered and valued.

**'Teachers are not simply at the heart of public education – they are its heart.'**

**– Stevenson and Gilliant, 2016**



**Throughout my career my PRD meeting has always been an extremely positive experience... I have benefitted from reviewers adopting a coaching approach which has in turn influenced me to adopt this approach when reviewing colleagues."**

**Leila Martin, HT at Angus Virtual School**

## Time and Timing

Schools and learning communities who invest in developing a strong culture of professional learning value the opportunities for ongoing professional dialogue as part of their identity. Through this they encourage their teachers to be agents of change, engaging in wider collaboration in and across their schools. Those schools and learning communities reinforce the importance of learning taking place, recognise and value teacher learning, and minimise the challenges of ongoing demands on time. The pressing issue of time is strategically managed through well-planned and effective self-evaluation opportunities being built into annual school improvement calendars and working time agreements, with protected time prioritised for key conversations.

There are no set guidelines on the time of year for formal PRD meetings. These should be managed to best fit the needs of the school community, taking into consideration any influencing factors from within their own contexts, or those set by their local authority or employer. The arrangements for formal PRD meetings may be affected by the personal circumstances of the teacher, or their **protected characteristics**. These should be considered in the PRD planning process.

It is timely for local authorities, employers and schools to reflect on whether current local arrangements for the calendaring of PRDs allows for the outcomes from PRD meetings to best influence and impact upon school improvement planning.



**Time is essential for effective PRD... It is vital that the time for the PRD conversation is undisturbed, no phone calls or chaps at the door. If time is not protected, or you are disturbed, it sends a clear message that the process is not valued."**

**Jayne Rowe, Glasgow City Council**

**'Where there was a professional learning culture in schools, there were fewer comments on time as an insurmountable problem; rather it was described as a prioritisation issue.'**

**– SCEL, 2018**



## Career Development

In preparation for PRD conversations, and in conjunction with roles and responsibilities, the reviewee should reflect on where they see themselves in their career. Reviewees may have a clear idea about the professional journey they wish to follow or may need support and/or challenge to identify what their professional future may look like. Teachers might include developing and growing their skills and dispositions as a valued classteacher or may also take a different route to formal leadership; both routes would **explore leadership opportunities** and allow continued professional growth. Regardless of the pathway a teacher wishes to pursue, the reviewer should be able to support these aspirations and **career conversations**, or alternatively constructively challenge the reviewee's beliefs regarding any limiting of aspirations.

Reviewees and reviewers should have knowledge of, and access to, professional learning opportunities, which may support ongoing career development, either into leadership and management, or following routes within the current and new structures.

Career conversations during PRD discussions can also help guide and influence future professional learning opportunities. Local authorities, employers and schools should strive to support teachers at all levels, through

regular communication, signposting them to the most current information on local and national career pathways.

Recognition should be given to the valuable professional learning opportunities experienced by those undertaking 'acting' roles. It is important that support is put in place to mentor and coach these colleagues throughout this time.



**Previously PRD was very much led by the principal teacher. Now the focus is supporting colleagues to evaluate their own needs and to help them to identify a suitable pathway for progression, whether that is to identify skills to enhance their classroom practice or to prepare for promotion."**

**Karen Broadfoot, St Andrew's High School**



**'Careers are developed one conversation at a time, over time. Whether a formal individual development planning meeting or an on-the-fly connection, its the quality of the conversation that matters to most employees.'**

**– Kaye and Winkle Giulioni, 2012**

## Coaching Approaches

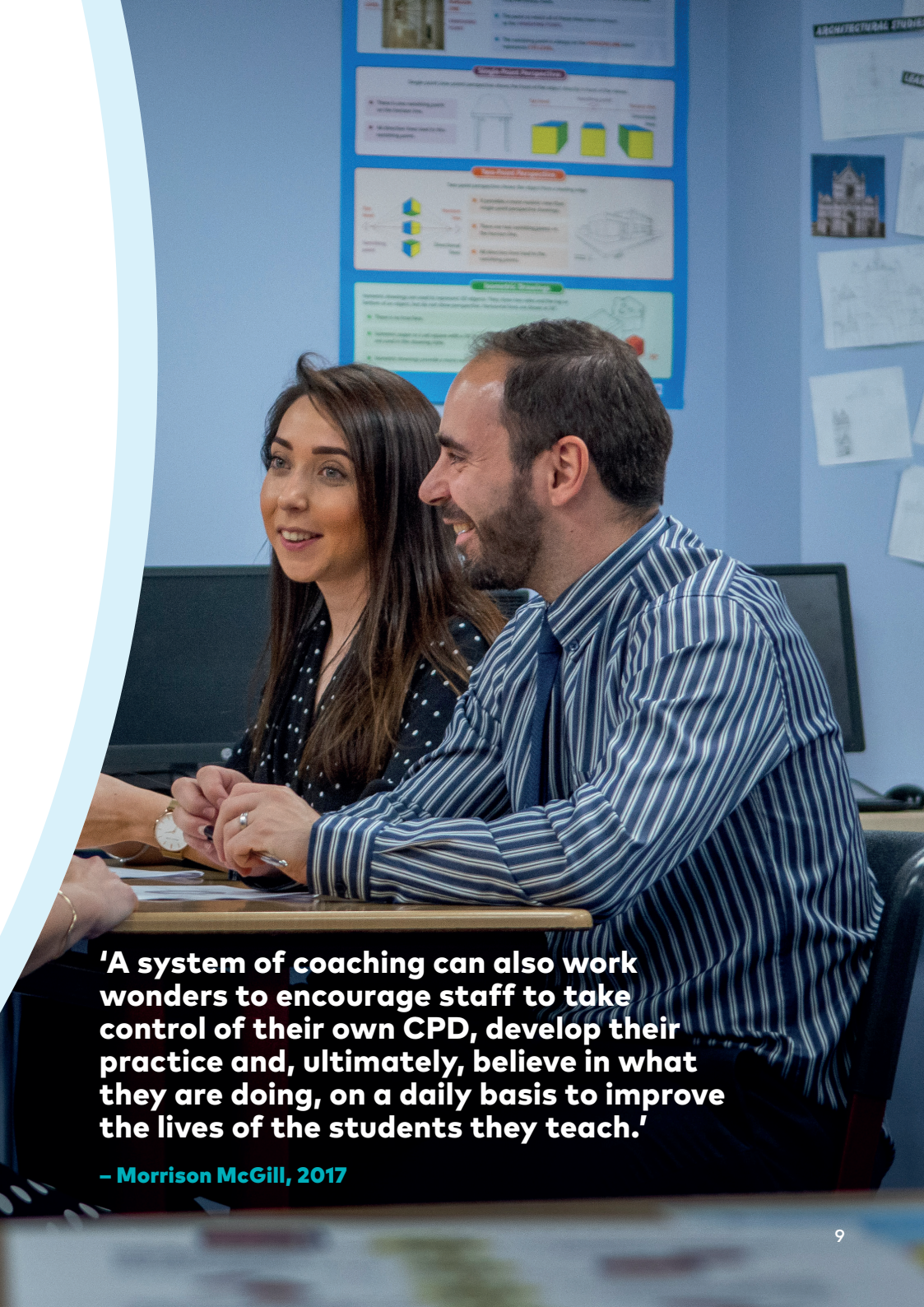
Effective **coaching approaches** ensure the reviewee is appropriately supported and challenged in their professional learning conversations. The role of the reviewer may be offered from the position of principal teacher or faculty head onwards, to ensure the profession builds capacity through coaching and leadership opportunities. There may be other colleagues with high-quality coaching experience who could also ably fulfil the role and should be offered the opportunity to do so.

Local authorities and employers should ensure that they adopt a robust and systematic approach to developing coaching approaches, providing quality training opportunities for all reviewers. Cognisance must be taken of the importance of reviewers receiving continuous high-quality coaching experiences within their own PRD to reinforce the positive impact of participating in a strong coaching approach model.



**As a local authority we believe in the power of coaching to develop practice and build capacity across the system."**

**Margo Cunningham, East Lothian Council**



**'A system of coaching can also work wonders to encourage staff to take control of their own CPD, develop their practice and, ultimately, believe in what they are doing, on a daily basis to improve the lives of the students they teach.'**

**– Morrison McGill, 2017**



## Professional Dialogue

Professional dialogue exists in many forms and should be ongoing to support meaningful and timely engagements with professional learning opportunities. These can take place across a wide range of settings:

- **inward-looking:** ongoing discussions during school-based collegiate activities, peer interactions and informal conversations
- **outward-looking:** dialogue with colleagues and other agencies across various learning communities
- **forward-looking:** planned and formal PRD meetings between reviewees and reviewers.

Within every professional dialogue or conversation, teachers must be mindful of issues of **bias, unconscious or otherwise**, and be willing to challenge their thinking, and that of colleagues to advance equality and prevent discrimination. In PRD conversations, both reviewees and reviewers must ensure equality of treatment and opportunities for all, including those with protected characteristics. Reviewees and reviewers must guard against limiting aspirations or showing favourable bias due to any pre-conceived ideas or contextual issues. This is particularly pertinent when discussing potential short and long-term career pathways. PRD should be a positive and beneficial experience with both parties engaging in fair and mutually respectful professional dialogue.



**'While no single conversation is guaranteed to change the trajectory of a business, a career, a marriage, or a life, any single conversation can.'**

– Scott, 2018



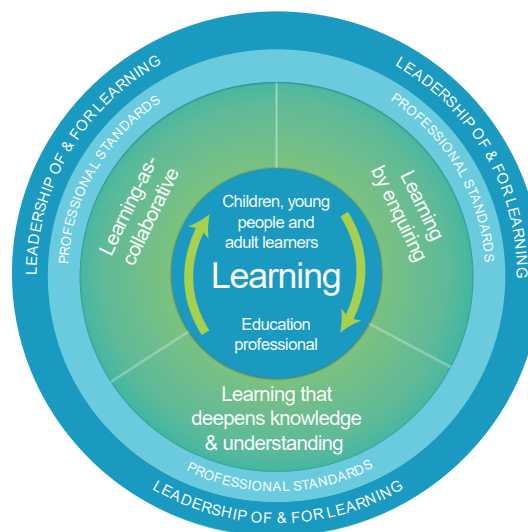
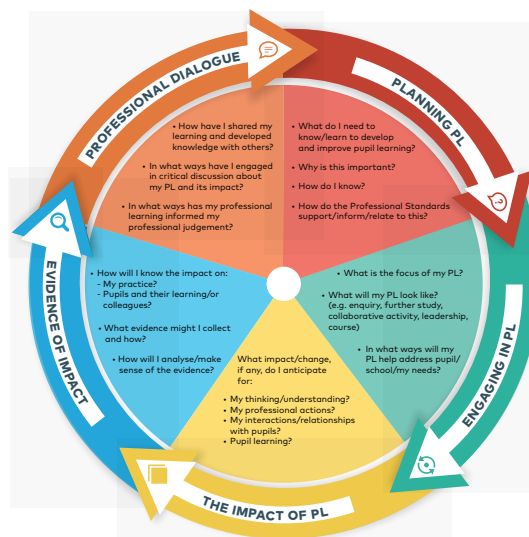
# Actions

Every teacher, regardless of their role, should access their annual entitlement to formal professional dialogue as part of their PRD. Reviewees, in a culture of empowerment, should lead this discussion, supported through a coaching approach facilitated by the reviewer. Everyone should be familiar with their role within PRD, and their individual responsibilities as either reviewee or reviewer, and locally-agreed policies.

The **Professional Learning Planning Cycle** assists and supports reflective thinking in PRD discussions, and forms part of a virtuous circle of learning. Schools may build knowledge and awareness of the varying approaches to professional learning within school communities through engagement with the **National Model of Professional Learning**. This provides a framework of career-long professional learning in action.

Self-evaluating against the Professional Standards, using **coaching wheels** (tools to help critical reflection of professionalism and practice), or both the models identified here, encourages reviewees to **celebrate their successes and strengths and identify their next steps** in professional learning. A high-quality **coaching conversation** with a reviewer will support, challenge and encourage deep reflection on the impact of professional learning on the reviewee and wider community. Reviewees should be able to draw on evidence to support their professional dialogue and, with the support of the reviewer, plan future areas of professional development.

## Professional Learning Planning Cycle



## National Model of Professional Learning





## Key Features of High-Quality PRD

To summarise, to ensure a positive PRD experience for all and to achieve the ten key features of high-quality PRD (identified within the graphic opposite) we must strive to make sure:

- there is a positive climate and culture of trust in schools
- schools have ensured they are prepared and ready to engage in high-quality PRD, and
- there is ongoing professional dialogue between colleagues.



**A good reviewer will push you to ask the difficult questions of yourself and then support you to find the answers. When reviewees and reviewers make the time to engage with the process it is fortifying for them both."**

**Susan Ward, Kingsland Primary**



**Key Features of High-Quality PRD**

## Employer Responsibilities

Locally-agreed policies will direct teachers as to how they should engage in the formal part of the PRD process, as well as how and where to record professional learning.

In light of high demands on teacher time, considerations should be given as to what is expected within teachers' **professional learning records**. This might include advice on only recording examples that have had a significant impact on learning and teaching or leadership, or provide a quick synopsis or bullet points as a reminder or aide memoire to stimulate conversations in PRD. This may be supported by reflective comments and appropriate evidence to capture the essence of this impact. No more than this is required for the purposes of a coaching conversation in the PRD discussions, nor for the purposes of Professional Update.

Through our engagement with the profession, concerns were raised that excessive bureaucratic PRD paperwork over-burdens the reviewee and can lessen the value and importance of the professional conversations themselves (see **Myths and Legends**). Care should be taken in local agreements to avoid over-complicating the process by including unrealistic expectations and lack of clarity. Opportunities should be taken to review local PRD policies regularly.



**We are fully committed to tackling bureaucracy and believe that the quality of the PRD conversation is the key to ensuring that our education professionals are confident and committed to their ongoing professional learning. PRD is not solely about the paperwork being completed in advance of the meeting."**

**Lesley Henderson, Fife Council**

Although professional dialogue should be ongoing throughout the year, the PRD meeting is usually formally recorded. This record highlights the identified areas of development and how these relate to the Professional Standards. Current practice across Scotland indicates that locally-agreed versions of such records would either be uploaded onto a local management system or onto MyGTCS where these records can be stored, referenced, added to and reviewed.

Every five years, line managers will 'confirm' teachers' engagement with ongoing, reflective professional learning, based on teachers' yearly PRD, for each Professional Update sign-off.

## Conclusion

**These revised Professional Review and Development Guidelines have been shaped and created by the profession, for the profession.**

**Without a culture of trust or school readiness, the key features of high-quality PRD are unlikely to be unlocked.**



**The most effective and powerful PRD for me has been when there has been the commitment of both – reviewee (myself) and my reviewer."**

**Christine Rednall, SEIC**



# What does this mean for me? Summary of Relevant Points

More detailed information can be read in *Roles and Responsibilities*

## Reviewees

- Be familiar with the roles and responsibilities in PRD
- Appreciate and understand the importance of a positive culture and climate of trust
- Embrace, participate in, and promote life-long learning
- Manage time effectively
- Understand the benefits of coaching
- Consider where you see yourself in your career
- Know where and how to access professional learning opportunities
- Be prepared to challenge unconscious bias, and that of others
- Self-evaluate across the Professional Standards and identify strengths and areas for development
- Record professional learning in a reflective journal
- Engage in meaningful ongoing professional learning dialogue with reviewer and others
- Make ongoing links between PRD, Professional Learning and Professional Update.

## Reviewers

- Be familiar with the roles and responsibilities in PRD
- Appreciate and understand the importance of a positive culture and climate of trust
- Embrace, participate in, and promote life-long learning
- Manage time effectively
- Know where and how to access professional learning opportunities to support the reviewee
- Be prepared to challenge unconscious bias, and that of others
- Engage in ongoing professional discussions with reviewee
- Be trained in coaching approaches and understand the benefits
- Be knowledgeable of career pathway options to support career conversations
- Be familiar with the Professional Standards to promote reflective professional dialogue.

## Senior Leadership Team in Schools

- Be familiar with the roles and responsibilities in PRD
- Have insight into the school's culture of trust through engaging in whole school self-evaluation
- Ensure all reviewers are trained/ have a high level of experience in using coaching approaches
- Be prepared to challenge unconscious bias, and that of others
- Maximise staff's professional learning opportunities to support strategic development in schools
- Assign partnerships between reviewers and reviewees to support ongoing professional learning throughout the year
- Take steps to remove any barriers possibly created by protected characteristics, to allow equal access to professional learning and PRD
- Prioritise time for high-quality PRD in schools in line with LNCT agreement
- Reflect, in partnership with local authorities and employers, as to whether local agreements are current and suitable.

## Local Authorities and Employers

- Be familiar with the roles and responsibilities in PRD
- Encourage and support a culture and climate of trust through all systems and wider engagements
- Invest in a robust PRD system which shows commitment to all teachers, including headteachers and supply teachers
- Reflect, in partnership with schools, whether current local PRD procedures are suitable
- Adopt a robust and systematic approach to developing coaching approaches, including providing quality training opportunities for all reviewers
- Provide training in awareness of unconscious bias, to support and challenge thinking during PRD conversations
- Take steps to remove any barriers possibly created by protected characteristics, to allow equal access to professional learning and PRD
- Review local PRD policies considering these Revised PRD Guidelines
- Share current information about professional learning and career pathways with all.

## Links, Resources and Acknowledgements

The hyperlinks in **blue**, and resources, in **green**, throughout this document can all be accessed at:

[www.gtcs.org.uk/prd-guidance-resources.aspx](http://www.gtcs.org.uk/prd-guidance-resources.aspx)

The direct link for this document is [bit.ly/unlocking-PRD](https://bit.ly/unlocking-PRD)

GTCS would like to thank all those involved in this review, for dedicating their time and sharing their experiences to help shape these new guidelines. Thanks also to staff and pupils at Hillhead Primary School, Hillhead High School and St Albert's Primary School for their permission to take photographs (Scott Richmond Photography).

**'An empowered system is one that grows stronger and more confident, working in partnership to lead learning and teaching that achieves excellence and equity for all learners. Empowerment and collaboration for improvement happen at all levels in an empowered system.'**

**– Education Scotland, 2019**







**GTC Scotland**

Comhairle Choitcheann Teagaisg nah-Alba  
Clerwood House,  
96 Clermiston Road,  
Edinburgh EH12 6UT  
Tel: 0131 314 6000  
Fax: 0131 314 6001  
E-mail: [gtcs@gtcs.org.uk](mailto:gtcs@gtcs.org.uk)

[www.gtcs.org.uk](http://www.gtcs.org.uk)  
[www.in2teaching.org.uk](http://www.in2teaching.org.uk)

