

PE2170/A: Abolish the General Teaching Council for Scotland

Scottish Government written submission, 4 July 2025

Does the Scottish Government consider the specific ask[s] of the petition to be practical or achievable? If not, please explain why.

The Scottish Government has no plans to abolish The General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS). The Scottish Government considers GTCS to be effective in its independent role as regulator for teachers in Scotland. The Scottish Government therefore does not consider the ask of this petition to be practical or achievable.

One of GTCS's core roles is to ensure teaching standards and decide if someone should belong to the teaching profession. Through the Fitness to Teach process, GTCS investigate serious concerns about teachers and college lecturers on their register and individuals applying to be on their register. Ministers cannot intervene in their processes or question decisions made by independent Fitness to Teach panels. Panel members are independent and are not GTCS employees.

Under the [Public Services Reform \(General Teaching Council for Scotland\) Order 2011](#), GTCS has an obligation to investigate the fitness to teach of any individual seeking registration (article 18(1)(a)) and may investigate any registered teacher's fitness to teach where GTCS becomes aware of circumstances which GTCS considers justify such an investigation (article 18(1)(b)). Accordingly, GTCS has discretion as to what circumstances it would investigate a registered teacher's fitness to teach.

Any changes to GTCS remit and processes would require significant changes to their underpinning legislation.

The Scottish Government is assured that the GTCS takes its child protection responsibilities very seriously and that they are constantly ensuring that they are appropriate and proportionate. The GTCS are currently looking for ways to make their Fitness to Teach process as efficient as it can be while meeting the public interest.

Overall, the Scottish Government does not believe it is in the public interest to abolish the GTCS in favour of a government agency and has no plans to do so.

What, if any, action the Scottish Government is currently taking to address the issues raised by this petition, and is any further action being considered that will achieve the ask[s] of this petition?

GTCS are currently reviewing their [Fitness to Teach Rules](#). These rules set out the legal framework for when and how GTCS investigate Fitness to Teach referrals and how the outcomes of cases are determined. Scottish Government officials continue to engage with the GTCS as their review of the Fitness to Teach Rules progresses.

GTCS commissioned an independent review by the Professional Standard Authority (PSA) of the performance and efficiency of the Fitness to Teach process in the

context of the statutory framework within which it sits. This report was [published](#) on 22 May. GTCS state that the results of the review will help inform the changes they need to make to the Fitness to Teach process and the rules that govern it.

Furthermore, GTCS has also published a [summary of feedback](#) from an open call to the public for views on the Fitness to Teach process. Likewise, it has been to inform the changes that they need to make in the Fitness to Teach process.

Is there any further information the Scottish Government wish to bring to the Committee's attention, which would assist it in considering this petition?

The petitioner, Paul Blaker, has repeatedly corresponded with the Scottish Government regarding GTCS and the Fitness to Teach process. Responses from the Scottish Government have focussed on the fact that the GTCS is the independent regulatory body for the teaching profession and Scottish Ministers have no locus to intervene in how GTCS are handling correspondence from members of the public.

Education Workforce Team

Workforce, Infrastructure & Digital Division

Directorate for Learning