

# Inspiring Lecturers

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## Work continues on routes to registration as 2,000 lecturers now registered

**More than 2,000 lecturers are now registered with GTC Scotland, following the launch of the national roll out of registration from autumn 2021.**

Tranche one (September 2021 to March 2022) of the registration programme was focused on lecturers covered by the national agreement (May and November 2017 National Agreements) who hold a TQFE or a GTC Scotland recognised primary or secondary teaching qualification gained in Scotland, with 190 days' teaching experience in a college setting.

If you were able to register in tranche one but have not yet started the process, you have until 30 June 2022 to register through the bulk upload process and should follow these simple steps:

1. Find your invitation. This will have been sent to your work email from GTC Scotland from September 2021 onwards and contains a link to start the online application process.
2. Complete and submit the online application form.
3. Complete your ePVG in seven days from receiving the email from Disclosure Scotland. The link will come from [disclosurescotland@notifications.service.gov.uk](mailto:disclosurescotland@notifications.service.gov.uk)
4. Pay your GTC Scotland registration fee.

If you are having problems, contact [collegesector@gtcs.org.uk](mailto:collegesector@gtcs.org.uk)

Tranche two begins from 2 May 2022 and runs to 30 June 2022 for lecturers who have a potential teaching qualification gained outside of Scotland. GTC Scotland is working with colleges to identify potential



applicants and issue invitations. If you think this applies to you and you have not received an invitation by mid-May, please speak to your college HR team in the first instance.

### Establishing routes to registration

Partnership working at the College Lecturer Registration Working Group (CLRWG) – which includes representatives from GTC Scotland, EIS-FELA, Colleges Scotland, universities offering the TQFE and the Scottish Government – continues to focus on establishing routes to registration for college lecturers.

Last month, GTC Scotland published its report on its public consultation on proposed updated Registration Rules. This was a comprehensive consultation and included specific questions in relation to proposed changes. GTC Scotland commissioned an external independent partner to review the responses and to prepare the report.

It was intended that the proposed Registration Rules would map out further routes for registration, coming into effect from April 2022. The report, however, identified that further engagement and consultation with stakeholders was required to clarify various important elements impacting upon the proposed Registration Rules.

Registration with GTC Scotland provides a supportive framework for enhancing lecturer professionalism, ultimately improving outcomes for learners and upholding trust in the lecturer profession. CLRWG is actively engaging with the findings of the consultation report. It continues its collective efforts to build routes to registration and realise the ambitions of the college sector.

[Access the consultation report](#)



# GTC Scotland's fitness to teach process

**Trust in the teaching profession is essential to an effective education system. Without it, our schools and colleges would be very different places.**

In the 1960s, teachers campaigned to become a self-regulating profession to ensure high standards for teachers were maintained. This resulted in the establishment of the General Teaching Council for Scotland in 1965. GTC Scotland's role is to help maintain trust in the teaching profession.

Implicit in belonging to a self-regulating profession is a collective responsibility to uphold the reputation of that profession. The reputation of the teaching profession comes into question where trust in a teacher or college lecturer has been breached.

GTC Scotland's regulatory process – called fitness to teach (FtT) – is the mechanism by which the teaching profession addresses breaches and upholds its reputation.

A very small number of teachers and college lecturers are referred to this process. Last year, we received FtT referrals in respect of 0.2% of the total number of individuals on the Register of Teachers, which is consistent with previous years.

**Jim Moore, Development Officer at GTC Scotland,** tells us more about the FtT process and the role of GTC Scotland's Regulation Team.

## Is FtT a disciplinary process?

The fitness to teach process is not about disciplining or punishing lecturers, it is about ensuring that we have a teaching profession in Scotland that is and remains fit to teach so that public trust and confidence in lecturers is maintained and learning is protected.

## What does the GTC Scotland Regulation Team do?

The Regulation Team is responsible for administering the fitness to teach process. The team will remain neutral throughout and are there to ensure that all the relevant information is gathered so that the right outcomes are reached in the public interest.

## What do they investigate?

They investigate and make decisions about a registered lecturer's fitness to teach in line with the Fitness to Teach Rules. The Fitness to Teach Threshold Policy explains what GTC Scotland investigates – we only investigate when an allegation is of a level of seriousness that we think that a lecturer presents a risk of harm.

Action is taken if a lecturer's fitness to teach is found to be impaired because of shortfalls in conduct. When action is taken, Fitness to Teach Hearings are held and Consent Orders issued. With its focus on ensuring maintenance of our teaching standards, our fitness to teach process is distinct from any employer or criminal process that may also be followed.

## When will the Regulation Team investigate a lecturer?

When GTC Scotland receives a fitness to teach conduct referral, the Threshold Policy is applied to decide whether investigation is required.

A referral can take place either (a) in relation to an applicant for registration where information has come to light during the application process that may have a bearing on the applicant's fitness to teach or (b) in relation to a registered lecturer from e.g. an employer or a member of the public.

In short, the team investigates when, on the face of the allegation or information received, they think there is a real prospect that a lecturer's fitness to teach would be found to be impaired.

## How is FtT assessed?

The team approach assessing whether fitness to teach is impaired holistically, in the here and now. They look at the shortfalls in conduct identified alongside where the lecturer is now. A big part of this includes considering what steps have been taken by the lecturer to openly and honestly reflect on the issues, learn from them and make changes to ensure they will not happen again.

While there are times when the shortfalls identified are so fundamental that there is no scope for remediation in this way, the approach recognises

that we all make mistakes and is about providing assurance that those same mistakes will not be repeated so that the public (especially learners) is not harmed and trust and confidence in the profession is maintained.

## Do the Regulation Team try to build a case against lecturers?

No. They approach the investigation process in an entirely neutral and objective way – they are investigating to find out what has happened and establish what action, if any, should be taken in the public interest, not to build a case for or against lecturers.

Throughout the investigation process, they aim to ensure that the process is fair and transparent and that any action taken is proportionate given all the circumstances and options available.

## Is there a difference in the FtT process for teachers and college lecturers?

The fitness to teach process applies to all registrants and the rules are applied fairly and proportionately to take account of the different circumstances that we come across in different cases. In that sense, the process is the same. The exception is that there is currently no competence referral route for lecturers.

## Find out more

To find out more about the Fitness to Teach process and to access the policies and rules mentioned in this article visit [www.gtcs.org.uk/college/fitness-to-teach-for-college-lecturers/](http://www.gtcs.org.uk/college/fitness-to-teach-for-college-lecturers/)

As part of the College Lecturer Registration Programme, fitness to teach information sessions are being held with college employers and booklets on the process for both employers and lecturers issued.

# What is education for?



Teaching is not only a technical role. It is complex relational and intellectual work. It requires hour by hour, sometimes minute by minute, effective, ethical reasoning. As GTC Scotland begins a process to review the Code of Professionalism and Conduct, the journey starts not with the document itself but in a conversation about ethics.

This conversation kicked off in January with Annual Lecture Presenter Dr Shirley Van Nuland, a Canadian academic, discussing how ethics are intertwined with teaching and the crucial role that teaching professionals have in the leadership of change. It gained momentum in March with the publication of two provocation videos asking: what is education for, and who is it for?

In the videos, Professor Gert Biesta from the University of Edinburgh asserts that teaching is not a moral profession and that an ethical teacher is not

necessarily a good teacher, while Dr Joe Smith of the University of Stirling concentrates on the ethics of knowledge in curriculum design. A roundtable was held, in which attendees were able to question both provocateurs and discuss their views of ethics.

Joe Smith



Throughout the year, GTC Scotland will host this discussion on ethics in the teaching profession through a series of provocation videos and roundtables to stimulate thinking and provide opportunities for college lecturers and teachers to feedback.

There are two practitioner Working Parties, one for college lecturers and one for teachers who will consult with other groups of colleagues, with particular expertise in ethics in the teaching profession. Their work will help

set the direction of the consultation on, and creation of a contemporary code of professionalism and conduct.

Below is a summary of the arguments so far. You can watch the full videos and access related resources at [www.gtcs.org.uk/ethics](http://www.gtcs.org.uk/ethics)

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## Responsive pedagogies: education for what and whose purposes?

Hear Professor Emeritus Rowena Arshad explain why a sense of fairness, intuition and common sense is not enough in the latest provocation video. This provocation will be discussed at a roundtable on 14 June 2022. If you would like to attend, please [register here](#)



Gert Biesta





### Why what we value, think and do really matters – Dr Shirley Van Nuland

Teaching is a complex process. Teaching is about building relationships, about knowing our students needs, and responding to those relationships and needs – a process that really matters.

Kenyon-Smith (2017) states: “Quality in learning and teaching evolves through new thinking and challenges.” It happens over time as we grow and mature as teachers. As a relational quest, teaching is “far more ... layered” (Campbell, 2008) than a teacher’s proficiency in presenting curricula requirements and instructional strategies. Teaching requires attention to its subtleties, those elements that are often indefinable that are morally and ethically infused but nevertheless perceived.

Being involved in education as a teacher is more than definitions (what is education?), theories (as important as these are), political ideologies from nation states/educational institutions, reports or accolades. Re-framing the narratives that exist in media through our teacher voices allows us to highlight the joys and hopes characteristic in teaching with “a more comprehensive and nuanced discussion of teaching that goes well beyond the current narratives” (Farley & Chamberlain, 2021). Using a strengths-based perspective, teachers’ voices can be heard, and the messages we give “are those we



Dr Shirley Van Nuland

deem desirable for the education of our students” (Biesta, 2015).

### Teaching is not a moral profession. An ethical teacher is not a good teacher – Professor Gert Biesta, University of Edinburgh

In my provocation video, I try to challenge the idea that teaching is a moral profession, that teachers should be ethical, and that that is all there is to say about the normative dimensions of teaching. I try to argue that there is a need to be more precise about what the place of ethics is in our conversations about teachers and teaching and what other normative considerations

need to be taken into account.

To make my points, I compare teaching to baking. And the issue then is that you can have an ethical baker who may have ‘ethical bakery’ on the shop window, but this doesn’t guarantee that the baker will be good at baking and will be able to bake good bread. The point here is that ethical questions, that is questions about right and wrong, about the ethical good, should be distinguished from questions about the good of the profession and the good of teaching.

### The ethics of knowledge in curriculum design – Dr Joe Smith, University of Stirling

Gert and I start in the same places, we follow the same argument and we come to the same conclusion but phrase it differently. Gert is in favour of narrowing the definition of ethics so that it doesn’t intrude on questions of purpose and I’m in favour of broadening what we mean by ethics so that we place purpose at the heart of it.

An important starting point is this question of the lost purposes of Scottish education. Over the last 15 to 20 years, since Curriculum for Excellence was first suggested, there has been ‘learnification’ in Scottish education. We talk about outcomes – skills for learning, life and work, insight data – as though they are purposes, and this focus on outcomes has crowded out the space for discussion of what we actually teach students for.

# That light bulb moment

**A-Z of Professional Learning contributor**  
**John Kelly on why imagination is**  
**crucial to delivering the best learning**



One of the joys of working in Further Education (FE) is the opportunity which the sector offers to students and staff alike to experience variety in learning experiences, subject areas and levels of study. This variety, and the constant tumult which we face in the sector, provides us with an environment in which it is not only desirable but, in fact, necessary to be imaginative in all that we do, to deliver the best we can for our learners. By necessity, this means that we must constantly participate in what we have come to know as professional learning.

The [A-Z of Professional Learning](#) recently created by GTC Scotland offers some glimpses of what lecturers in the sector see as their experiences of professional learning. Through this A-Z, we can build up a picture of the diversity of opportunities for professional learning in FE, ranging from the impact of coaching on promoting equality and lecturer empowerment, to the benefits which scholarship provides in allowing us to create examples of good practice to share with others. While many may see professional learning as being embedded in formal courses or CPD sessions, others view professional learning as instances when that light

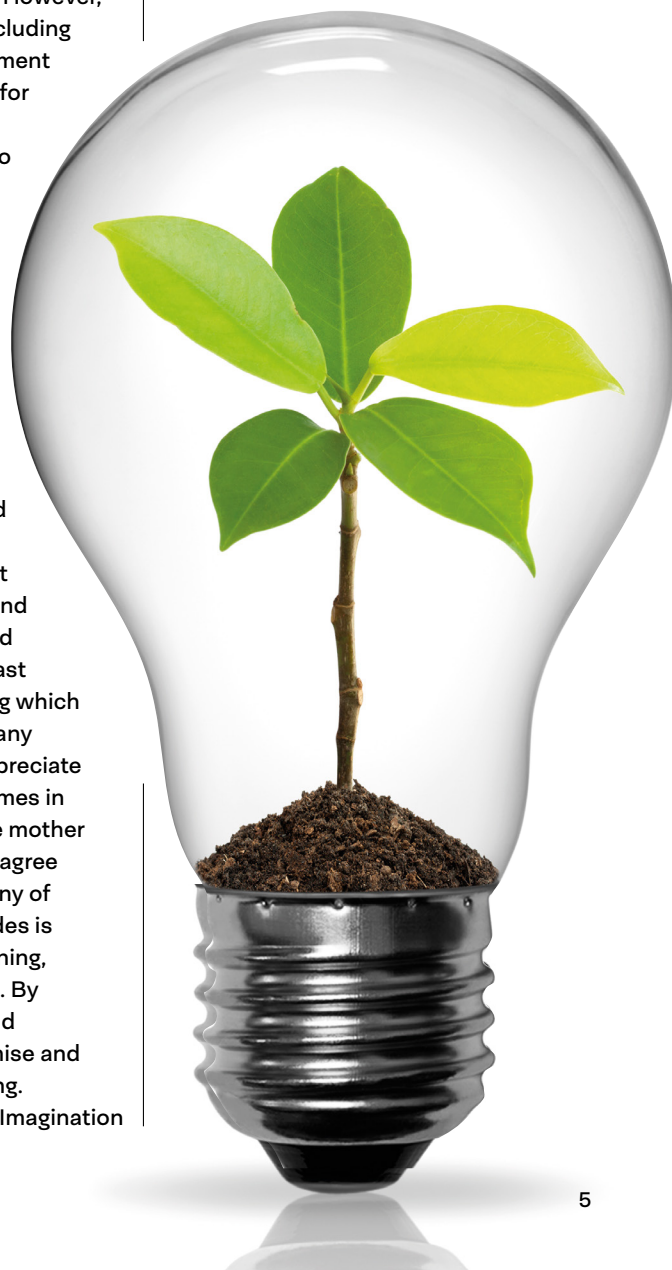
bulb moment occurred. Or, more likely, when confronted with a problem, a lecturer or team has been able to build upon their existing knowledge by using their imagination to create something new and more valuable.

My own experiences throughout Covid led me to consider alternatives which may not have seemed possible only a couple of years before. Lockdown necessitated a rapid shift to providing online support on a scale never imagined in the sector. However, other opportunities arose, including the use of alternative assessment models, providing more time for teaching and learning, and in many instances the chance to explore the outer fringes of our curriculum. Imagination and creativity were required to build upon existing knowledge and skills. While we have faced challenges and continue to do so, we have begun to emerge from the pandemic in a better place in some ways due to the additional knowledge and skills which we have gained.

It strikes me, however, that we should step back a little and consider what we have gained from the experience of the past couple of years. One key thing which I think is significant is that many staff in the sector do now appreciate that professional learning comes in many forms. 'Necessity is the mother of invention', say some, and I agree with this old adage. What many of us have been doing for decades is engaging in professional learning, without identifying it as such. By sharing the A-Z, GTC Scotland hopes to help us all to recognise and value our professional learning.

It was Einstein who said: "Imagination

is more important than knowledge". The A-Z of Professional Learning can provide us all with examples of the wonderful process of ongoing development which takes place in our sector. I would encourage you to continue to share your experiences, expanding the A-Z into further areas which we have not yet imagined. Staff and students in the FE sector are full of imagination, creation and curiosity and I look forward to discovering new ideas from this resource.





# A-Z SUBMISSIONS



## Coaching: Awkward silences, listening and light bulb moments

Joe Mulholland, who at the time of his professional learning was working at City of Glasgow College as an Associate Dean, took part in a coaching programme facilitated by GTC Scotland. He developed knowledge and experience to help improve his approach to developing positive working relationships with colleagues



Joe Mulholland

by using coaching techniques. He also found himself moving from learner to tutor, as he and colleagues delivered the same coaching course with colleagues from Scotland's colleges.

## Developing a deeper understanding of course content

John Kelly, a Business Lecturer at West College Scotland, used the additional teaching and learning time created by not needing to include exam preparation in his course to introduce his class to a new concept based on his professional learning. He developed a deeper understanding of the topic of Doughnut Economics through additional research and reading, and applied this understanding when creating lessons for his Business and Economics students.

## Professional reflections on dialogue in professional learning

A secondment as a Learning and Digital Skills Mentor at Forth Valley College was a great opportunity for Kerry Kay to learn and teach new skills and support staff across the college in a variety of ways. This experience has sharpened



Kerry Kay

Kerry's belief that mentoring in FE is a worthwhile endeavour, and she hopes it is one that FE will continue to embrace. Alongside GTC Scotland registration, Kerry believes it is the most significant recognition of the importance of continuous professional development for FE lecturers in recent times.

We are keen to include as many contributions as possible in the A-Z. If you have an example of professional learning you would like to share, please [visit our website](#) to find out more.

## CELEBRATING COLLEGE LECTURER PROFESSIONALISM

GTC Scotland was the proud sponsor of two categories in CDN's College Awards 2021: College Colleague of the Year and Learning and Teaching Colleague of the Year. Congratulations to winners Sophy Mitchell from Dundee and Angus College and Mercedes Richardson from Glasgow Clyde College.

