



# The Teacher Induction Scheme (TIS) in Scotland: Adoption, Evolution, Revolution

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## Introduction

Scotland was one of the first education systems in the world to introduce a formal programme for teacher induction in 2002. The Scottish Teacher Induction Scheme (TIS) has endured for almost 20 years, largely unchanged, except for austerity-driven adjustments to the reduced teaching timetable for newly qualified teachers (NQTs) or, as they are more generally called, probationers or probationary teachers.

The teacher induction scheme (TIS) provides a guaranteed one-year training post in a local authority to every eligible student graduating with a teaching qualification from one of Scotland's universities (GTCS, online). A flexible route is also available for those for whom the TIS is not appropriate, for example those who have decided to opt out of the TIS or are working in a non-state school or have opted to complete their

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probation in another jurisdiction (GTCS, online). This chapter focuses primarily on the teacher induction scheme.

The TIS is now embedded within the Scottish education system and is seen as essential to supporting new entrants to the profession and ensuring teacher quality. The centrality of the scheme has been reinforced during the Covid pandemic, when the structured professional development and mentoring that are key features of the scheme, have become ever more important for newly qualified teachers whose practicum experience was impacted upon or curtailed by the pandemic.

This chapter outlines the development of the teacher induction scheme in Scotland from its introduction in 2002. The chapter considers the policy drivers and contextual factors that led to this and considers how the TIS has evolved as the wider educational context and environment around it has shifted. The chapter concludes by examining its current relevance for newly qualified teachers as schools adapt to contemporary challenges, including the pandemic and its impact, as well as new policy drivers to diversify the teaching profession.

## A Teaching Profession for the 21st Century

Scotland is one of the devolved nations of the United Kingdom, with responsibility for education and schools transferred from the UK government to the Scottish government. Teacher preparation occurs through initial teacher education (ITE) delivered through university providers. Partnership is a key feature of teacher preparation programmes and ITE providers work closely with local education authorities and schools in programme design and delivery and in planning practicum or placement experiences for student teachers. Such partnership extends to the teacher induction scheme with key stakeholders working together in the delivery of the components of the TIS.

Prior to the introduction of the teacher induction scheme, induction for newly qualified teachers was completed over a two-year period and experiences varied greatly (Scottish Executive Education Department, 2001: 7). The development of a new induction programme was driven by a concern to provide a more coherent, planned and supportive experience

for new teachers to improve teacher quality and teacher retention. The introduction of the TIS occurred as part of major workforce remodelling agreement 'A Teaching Profession for the 21st Century' (Scottish Executive Education Department, 2001). The report which led to this agreement was based on a wide-scale review of teachers' pay and conditions, their preparation and ongoing development. Many shortcomings were found in the existing programme of support for new teachers and it was reported that:

While some new teachers praised the help they had been given in their probationary period and quickly secured permanent employment, others were given little guidance and could find themselves teaching in a multiplicity of schools on a supply basis. This gave them insufficient opportunity to get to know either the pupils or the staff with whom they were working; they received little in the way of mentoring support or guidance; and it could mean that the probationary period took longer than two years. The Committee views this situation as little short of scandalous. It is no way to treat a new entrant to any profession, let alone one that is as demanding and of such public importance as teaching, where help and wise counsel are essential. It is difficult to think of circumstances more likely to lead to discouragement and to new recruits leaving the profession for other jobs (SEED, 2001: 7; Purdon, 2003 in Byrce & Humes, 2003; O'Brien, 2009).

As part of the workforce agreement, a new induction programme for beginning teachers was introduced. New teachers were guaranteed a full time, fully salaried teaching post for one year following initial qualification. They were given a reduced teaching timetable (0.7 FTE\*)<sup>1</sup> to provide time for engagement in professional development in school or in the local education authority. They were also assigned a mentor and supporter. While the programme offered a qualitatively different experience for new teachers, there were aspects of the mentor/supporter role which generated tension. For example, while training for mentors was provided by local authorities and schools, there was variance in this, at least in the initial phase of the TIS, and there continues to be no requirement for a formal qualification for mentors. Another source of tension was the dual

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<sup>1</sup> FTE: Full Time Equivalent.

role of the mentor in support and evaluation where the mentor 'signs off' on the completion of the probationary period and attainment of the Standard for Full Registration. Nevertheless a central goal of the TIS was achieved in providing new teachers with a less fragmented initial experience in their first year of teaching.

## Teaching Scotland's Future

Almost ten years after 'A Teaching Profession for the 21st Century' and the introduction of the teacher induction scheme, a review of teacher education in Scotland was launched. This review, led by the former Chief Inspector of Schools, Graham Donaldson, resulted in 50 recommendations, adopted in full or part by the Scottish government. The *Teaching Scotland's Future* report recognised and acknowledged the successes of the TIS:

The induction scheme which followed the Teachers' Agreement is rightly much admired internationally and was praised as 'world-class' in the 2007 OECD country review of Scotland. The guarantee of a paid place on the scheme ended the fractured probation arrangements which had hitherto characterised the experience of many newly qualified teachers. In providing protected non-contact time and mentoring, the scheme also reflected acknowledged best practice internationally (Donaldson, 2011: 8).

The report did however highlight issues that Donaldson and the review group saw as needing to be addressed, including 'the role and training of mentors and some duplication with pre-service courses' (Donaldson, 2011: 8). To address these, the *Teaching Scotland's Future* report recommended greater continuity and connection between initial teacher preparation and induction so that they are planned as 'one overall experience' (Donaldson, 2011: 88) and with the involvement of university-based teacher educators in the development and delivery of induction schemes (Donaldson, 2011: 94). A more structured approach to the selection and training of mentors was recommended and local authorities and national bodies were tasked with developing approaches to quality assure the

scheme (Donaldson, 2011: 53). The report also sought to address the challenges that can arise in the mentoring relationship when the mentor also has a role in evaluation/assessment and the creation of two roles—mentor and supporter—was recommended (Donaldson, 2011: 54).

Although the teacher induction scheme formed only one part of the Donaldson review, which looked at all aspects and stages of teacher education in Scotland, including school leadership, the review and subsequent report provided the most comprehensive evaluation and analysis of the scheme to be undertaken since its introduction. Given the investment, financially by employers and professionally by new teachers and their mentors, evaluation and research on the impact of the scheme has been limited (Shanks, 2020), an issue that is considered in the final section of this chapter.

## Advancing Professionalism in Scotland

While the *Teaching Scotland's Future* report focused on teacher education, another report published the same year looked at the terms and conditions of teachers' employment, as well as impact and affordability (McCormac, 2011; Hulme & Menter, 2014: 675). With the global economic downturn of 2007–2008, austerity measures across the education sector had led to efforts to reduce teacher numbers and create salary savings. The impact, as Hulme and Menter (2014) observed, was that 'Whilst highly prized, the TIS has been drawn into deliberation on how to sustain commitments to education in challenging economic circumstances' (Hulme & Menter, 2014: 674).

This manifested itself two ways: (i) a reduction in the non-contact time allocated to new teachers so that class contact time increased from 0.7 FTE to 0.8 FTE (Kidner, 2011: 15); and (ii) growing teacher unemployment following the salaried induction year, with the GTCS reporting in 2010 that the proportion of new teachers not employed in teaching in Scotland in the October following induction rose from 5.3% to 27.1% between October 2005 and 2010 (Kidner, 2011; GTCS (2010: 3) in Hulme & Menter, 2014).

Hulme and Menter (2014) argue that ‘fragmented employment experiences’ are not unusual at an early career stage but the TIS ‘created a sense of expectation and security in what turned out to be acutely unstable and insecure times in the wake of the global economic crisis’ (Hulme & Menter, 2014: 682). In their study of the experiences of early career teachers in Scotland they found that investment in strengthening mentoring practices during formal induction is potentially undermined by ‘intermittent employment experiences in the early years post qualification’ (Hulme & Menter, 2014: 684). The implications of this were noted by Fiona Hyslop, then Cabinet Secretary of Education and Lifelong Learning (equivalent to Minister of Education) who raised concerns that the teacher induction scheme had ‘displaced’ rather than addressed the problem of new teacher unemployment (Kidner, 2011: 10).

In the aftermath of the global economic crisis there was a collective effort to avoid future teacher unemployment of the scale outlined above through a national, collaborative approach to teacher workforce planning and allocation of places for initial teacher preparation in universities. Arguably, this was the first crisis to test the resilience of the teacher induction scheme, which endured with some adjustments and compromises to the original model introduced in 2002. The global pandemic in 2020–2021 presented another significant challenge for the TIS, which is explored later in this chapter.

## The Role of the General Teaching Council

The General Teaching Council of Scotland has had a key role in overseeing the teacher induction scheme since its introduction in 2002. As the regulatory body for teachers, the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) was set up under the Teaching Council (Scotland) Act in 1965. It was the first such body for teachers in the United Kingdom and one of the first teaching councils in the world (GTCS, online).

GTC Scotland, in partnership with the Scottish Government, is responsible for the administration of the scheme and determining whether full registration is to be awarded (GTCS, online). The GTCS also works very closely with local education authorities (who are the

direct employers for teachers) to ensure ‘a consistent experience for all probationers across Scotland’ (GTCS, online). Probation managers at local authority level are therefore key contacts connecting the GTCS, schools, probationary teachers and school-based mentors.

As well as providing information and guidance for newly qualified teachers, the GTCS also receives and approves interim and final professional ‘profiles’ that probationary teachers are required to submit. Through these profiles new teachers evidence the ways in which they are meeting the Standard for Full Registration for full admission to the teaching profession. The interim profile is submitted electronically in December of the probationary year. A ‘Satisfactory’ recommendation at this stage means the probationary teacher can progress to completion of the final profile which is submitted in May/June of the probationary year. If the recommendation is ‘Unsatisfactory’ or ‘Cause for Concern’ the probationary teacher must satisfactorily complete a second interim profile to enable progression to the final profile (GTCS, online). Recommendation for progression involves both the supporter assigned to the probationary teacher and their headteacher. The headteacher can confirm or override the supporter’s recommendation which is then available to the local authority probation manager for final checking before final submission to the GTCS. In the unusual circumstances of a recommendation for an extension to the probationary period or that provisional registration is cancelled, further advice is provided to the probationary teacher by the GTCS (GTCS, online). The probationary year concludes with celebratory events held by GTCS and local authorities for all those who have successfully completed the teacher induction scheme.

## **The Role of the Supporter/Mentor**

As noted above, the mentor/supporter assigned to the probationary teacher has an important role in recommending progression during the probationary year and the final recommendation for the award of the Standard Full Registration. Thus the mentor/supporter is an important influence in the early career experiences of the new teacher in shaping their future. The conflation of support and assessment in the model of

mentoring envisaged in the initial TIS was seen to be problematic. The *Teaching Scotland's Future* report noted that the original guidance on the teacher induction scheme proposed two key school-based roles: the mentor who would complete the formal aspects of the scheme with the new teacher; and the supporter who would provide pastoral care and support to the new teacher, offering an open space for new teachers to seek advice and share successes and concerns (Donaldson, 2011: 52). Donaldson's review found that the two roles had merged into one for many probationer teachers (p. 52) and recommended that:

the roles and responsibilities of different individuals within the teacher induction scheme need to be updated and clarified. Given the potential tension in the assessment and support functions of mentors, all new teachers in Scotland should have access to a mentor and a supporter (Donaldson, 2011: 94).

Clarification about the supporter's role and the headteacher's role is provided by GTCS (GTCS, online). As well as providing pastoral support, supporters have a key role in working with new teachers in planning their professional learning and identifying opportunities for professional development. They monitor and evaluate progress through observed teaching sessions and provide ongoing feedback to the probationary teacher. They oversee actions plans and the development of the interim and final profile which they then complete, in conjunction with the headteacher (GTCS, online). Creating the conditions for this programme of support for the probationary teacher is a key role of the headteacher, who is responsible for enabling the new teacher and their supporter to have time to discuss progress, ensuring access to appropriate professional development activities, providing a varied teaching commitment and, with the supporter, completing the interim and final profiles (GTCS, online).

Given the responsibility associated with the supporter's role, the professional and personal skills it requires and the resourcing attached to it (0.1FTE), there is no national scheme for identifying or selecting supporters and no training programme available at a national level. Thus the processes for assigning a supporter can vary from school to school. In



smaller schools, often in the primary sector, the headteacher may also take on the role of supporter. In other schools the role may be delegated to another member of staff, often a member of the school's senior leadership team.

The commitment to increasing diversity in the teaching profession now requires careful attention in the selection of mentors and supporters. The 2018 report *Teaching in a Diverse Scotland: Increasing and Retaining Minority Ethnic Teachers in Scotland's Schools* (Arshad, 2018) requires action from all involved in teaching, including universities, local authorities and schools to effectively engage with this issue by promoting teaching as an attractive and worthwhile career for minority ethnic students and then being committed to supporting them throughout their careers (Arshad, 2018: 1).

The absence of a formal qualification for mentoring as part of the teacher induction scheme means that training for new and experienced mentors can also vary across local authorities. Some schools and local education authorities commission continuing professional development/learning (CPD/CLPL) mentoring courses from teacher education providers or private agencies or fund participation in a university-based mentoring programme. Though not mandatory, the requirement for a formal qualification in mentoring is increasingly seen as important to the future development and strengthening of the teacher induction scheme.

## Impact of the Teacher Induction Scheme

The teacher induction scheme has been heralded as one of the most successful elements of the infrastructure for teacher education in Scotland. It was described by the OECD (2007: 15); as 'world class' and the 'gold standard' of 'exemplary' teacher induction (McCormac, 2011: 21 in Hulme & Menter, 2014: 674). Yet, in spite of this, independent evaluation and research of the scheme is limited. Shanks (2020) notes that while there have been some minor changes, there has not been an official review or overhaul since its introduction. An early review, conducted by GTCS in 2005, looked at 'Experiences of the teacher induction scheme: operation, support and CPD' (Pearson & Robson, 2005). This report

referenced a quantitative review undertaken by GTCS in 2002–2003, which indicated that the scheme had been very successful in its first year of operation with clear evidence to show that probationer teachers were being well supported during their induction year (Pearson & Robson, 2005: 5). Similar findings were reported for a second review undertaken during 2003–2004 (*ibid.*) and the report concluded that ‘In general, the Teacher Induction Scheme has been one of the most successful education initiatives in Scotland in recent years’ (Pearson & Robson, 2005: 5).

The 2005 survey reported on research undertaken with 3908 teachers who had gained full registration in June 2003 and June 2004, that is the first two groups of new teachers who were involved in the teacher induction scheme (Pearson & Robson, 2005: 5). The survey findings were reported as being consistent with earlier findings that ‘the Teacher Induction Scheme is working well and is providing a very positive experience for many of our probationer teachers (Pearson & Robson, 2005: 19). However, it also noted that, ‘as with any new initiative there are a number of issues which may now need to be reviewed and amended now that the new scheme has ‘settled in’ (*ibid.*). The need for more effective communication amongst all of the parties involved was seen as a central issue to be addressed so that the ‘high quality experience’ is shared across the country to facilitate a more consistent approach (*ibid.*). The report made a set of recommendations which included:

- The development of a national supporter/mentor module for all staff involved in working with students and probationer teachers.
- A survey to ascertain headteachers’ and supporters’/mentors’ perceptions of the teacher induction scheme.
- A survey of the models of support provided by local authorities/schools to provide a more detailed picture of the different types of support used, the training programmes that have been developed for supporters/mentors and the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms that have been put in place.
- Review of the current arrangements regarding the 0.7/0.3 teaching/CPD split undertaken to determine how this time could be used to support the development of new teachers most effectively (Pearson & Robson, 2005: 22).

Much of the extant research relating to the TIS has been undertaken by the General Teaching Council, which is also the regulatory body with responsibility and oversight for the initiative. Research commissioned in 2008 by the General Teaching Council for Scotland, in partnership with the Scottish Government, focused on 'the impact of recent policy initiatives in teacher education, notably the Teacher Induction Scheme, on the professional culture of teachers in Scotland' (Hulme et al., 2008). The study found that:

early career teachers who secure full time permanent posts are having a positive impact on school culture and on teaching and learning. They are well prepared through initial teacher education and well supported through the Teacher Induction Scheme to undertake their role as class teachers. Recent entrants to the profession demonstrate enhanced capacity for reflection and self-evaluation and demonstrate positive orientations to CPD and peer observation. Experienced colleagues comment on the energy, confidence, enthusiasm and commitment of the new teachers with whom they work. Early career teachers who are products of the Teacher Induction Scheme are increasingly becoming involved as mentors, supporting beginning teachers. Possibilities for peer learning have been enhanced by the reduction in class contact time and improved opportunities for CPD (Hulme et al., 2008: 125).

The research also raised questions about post probationary support, suggesting that there may be benefits in extending the mentoring arrangements in the year following the completion of the probationary period and the need for targeted professional development in the following years in the early career phase (Hulme et al., 2008: 126).

Other research has been undertaken by academics. O'Brien (2009: 42) commented on how the scheme has been 'celebrated by major stakeholders as an example of successful innovation of professional benefit to Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs), schools and teachers more generally' but questions whether the scheme was deserving of the local accolades it has received (ibid.). Through his analysis O'Brien concludes that, largely, it does but more needs to be known about what happens on the ground

and its impact for supporters, beginning teachers and schools—a fertile area for field and ethnographic research, he suggests (O'Brien, 2009: 49).

In their study of probationary teachers Hulme and Menter (2014) reported positive experiences from interviewees, and specifically 'for teachers appointed to 'permanent' posts in the year following induction the 'practice shock' appears to have been delayed and reduced by structured induction' (Hulme & Menter, 2014: 681).

Recent research relating to the TIS places the Scottish scheme in a comparative context, examining approaches in Denmark, Malta and Scotland. In their study, Shanks et al. (2020) emphasise the need for collaborative cultures and supportive leadership contexts and argue that 'whatever model is in place, an authentic partnership between schools, NQTs and mentors that anchors new teachers into the teaching profession is needed' (Shanks et al., 2020: 11).

## **Becoming a Teacher During the Global Pandemic**

The global pandemic which began in 2020 has left many feeling anchorless, not just teachers and school leaders but pupils and their families. Shanks' et al. (2020) observation of the need to anchor new teachers into the profession takes on added importance as the circumstances and conditions in which newly qualified teachers join the teaching profession have changed significantly. When the pandemic struck, student teachers were called back from placement/practicum and with schools closing as part of national lockdowns, their field experiences were brought to an abrupt end. While Scottish ITE providers worked quickly to provide alternative programmes, the lived experience of classroom practice cannot be easily replicated in other fora or environments.

In Scotland, there was recognition that student teachers impacted by the pandemic would be likely to require more support in their induction/probationary year as new entrants to the teaching profession. There was recognition too that much of this was immeasurable, as the professional and personal impact varies from person to person. GTCS worked to put

in place a range of support mechanisms and contingencies for NQTs. Their 'Guidance for Probationers' recognised the challenges:

- You will have had less opportunities for learning than usual to prepare you for your role as a probationer teacher, which may cause some concerns or anxiety and you may feel unprepared. You have had to manage and deal with the premature and unexpected ending of your initial teacher education (ITE) experience.
- Your role as a teacher and the environment and system you will be working in may look different to the role you had anticipated, and you may not know what to expect.
- Feeling unprepared due to the COVID-19 pandemic your teaching qualification ended before expected. This premature ending may result in you feeling unprepared and that you don't have enough training or experience to start your role. You may also worry that other staff or parents hold this perception of you (Hepburn, 2020).

A series of practical actions to support new teachers as they began their induction year was made available and guidance on contingencies in the event of further partial or local lockdowns sought to give reassurance. This included the adjustment to the requisite number of 'days' to be completed for induction—from 190 days to 140 (GTCS, online).

The pandemic tested the agility of the teacher induction scheme to respond flexibly to unplanned and unprecedented circumstances. Responding quickly and pragmatically gave reassurance across the wider education sector that Scotland's new cohort of new teachers would be fully supported but also that they had much to offer too in terms of their digital competence.

## Conclusion

A key challenge for any profession is how it sustains and renews itself. The ways in which new entrants to the profession are inducted and are supported through their formative years is central to this. The teacher induction scheme in Scotland represents one way in which a national

education system has responded to this. After nearly 20 years since its introduction it is central to the infrastructure for teacher development, with commitment across stakeholders to fulfilling their obligations to it. There have been times when it has been tested and adjustments needed but these have been important to its ability to endure. Despite this centrality, it remains under-researched, and yet there is much to investigate that can help us to understand the needs of new teachers. Recent challenges such as the pandemic have served to amplify this and, as seems likely, the ‘scarring’ from the pandemic will endure for many years, there is a need to know more to be able to support better.

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