



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

Committee for Education

# Report on the Committee Stage of the General Teaching Council Bill

This report is the property of the Committee for Education  
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Report: NIA 171/22-27 Committee for Education

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# **Powers and Membership**

## **Powers**

The Committee for Education is a Statutory Departmental Committee established in accordance with paragraphs 8 and 9 of Strand One of the Belfast Agreement and under Assembly Standing Order No. 48. The Committee has a scrutiny, policy development and consultation role with respect to the Department of Education and has a role in the initiation of legislation.

The Committee has power to:

- consider and advise on Departmental budgets and annual plans in the context of the overall budget allocation;
- approve relevant delegated legislation and take the Committee Stage of relevant primary legislation;
- call for persons and papers;
- initiate inquiries and make reports; and
- consider and advise on matters brought to the Committee by the Minister of Education.

## **Membership**

The Committee has nine members including a Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson and a quorum of five members. The membership of the Committee is as follows:

- Mr Nick Mathison MLA (Chairperson)
- Mr Pat Sheehan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
- Mr Danny Baker MLA

- Mr David Brooks MLA<sup>1,2</sup>
- Mr Jon Burrows MLA<sup>3,4</sup>
- Mrs Michelle Guy MLA<sup>5</sup>
- Ms Cara Hunter MLA
- Mrs Cathy Mason MLA
- Mrs Julie Middleton MLA<sup>6,7,8,9</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> With effect from 1 July 2025, Mr David Brooks replaced Ms Cheryl Brownlee

<sup>2</sup> With effect from 9 June 2025, Ms Cheryl Brownlee replaced Mr David Brooks

<sup>3</sup> With effect from 8 September 2025, Mr Jon Burrows replaced Mr Colin Crawford

<sup>4</sup> With effect from 7 October 2024, Mr Colin Crawford replaced Mr Robbie Butler

<sup>5</sup> With effect from 9 September 2024, Mrs Michelle Guy replaced Ms Kate Nicholl

<sup>6</sup> With effect from 5 May 2026, Mrs Julie Middleton replaced Mr Peter Martin

<sup>7</sup> With effect from 2 March 2026, Mr Peter Martin replaced Mr Gary Middleton

<sup>8</sup> With effect from 23 September 2025, Mr Gary Middleton replaced Mr Peter Martin

<sup>9</sup> With effect from 16 September 2024, Mr Peter Martin replaced Ms Cheryl Brownlee

## List of Abbreviations and Acronyms used in this Report

ALB: Arm's Length Body

ASCL: Association of School and College Leaders

BTMM: Baker Tilly Mooney Moore

CPANI: Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland

DE: Department of Education

DSO: Departmental Solicitor's Office

DPM: Delegated Powers Memorandum

EFM: Explanatory and Financial Memorandum

EWC: Education Workforce Council

GTCNI: General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland

INTO: Irish National Teachers' Organisation

NAHT (NI): National Association of Head Teachers (Northern Ireland)

NEU: National Education Union Northern Ireland

NICCY: Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children & Young People

NITC: Northern Ireland Teachers' Council

RaISe: Research and Information Service

The 1998 Order: The Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998

TRA: Teacher Regulatory Agency

UK: United Kingdom

UTU: Ulster Teachers' Union

## Executive Summary

1. This report sets out the Committee for Education’s consideration of the General Teaching Council Bill.
2. The General Teaching Council Bill was introduced in the Northern Ireland Assembly on 24 November 2025 and was referred to the Committee for Education for consideration after Second Stage on 2 December 2025. Committee Stage commenced on 3 December 2025 and the Committee agreed a motion to extend the Stage on the same date. The Assembly subsequently approved the extension to 27 May 2026 on 12 January 2026.
3. The Bill seeks to reinstate the Board of the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (GTCNI), following the decision of the then Minister of Education, Michelle McIlveen, in December 2021 to dissolve the Council in response to an independent review by Baker Tilly Mooney Moore (BTMM), which identified significant deficiencies in governance, regulatory capability and operational delivery.
4. Following consultation and business case analysis, the Department of Education (DE) determined that retaining and reforming GTCNI represented the most cost-effective and lowest-risk option for delivering essential statutory functions.
5. The Bill also introduces two new offences and expands the sanctions available to the Council. It contains 16 clauses. The Long Title describes it as a Bill to *“Make provision in relation to the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland”*.
6. The Bill provides the Department with a broad set of delegated powers enabling it to make regulations across key areas of GTCNI’s governance and regulatory functions. These powers will allow the Department to set the constitutional framework for the reformed Council, including Board composition, terms of office, appointment and removal processes and the establishment of committees and sub-committees. They will also enable the Department to prescribe the detailed procedures for teacher registration, provisional registration and revalidation, as well as the operation of investigatory and

fitness-to-practice panels, disciplinary processes, interim suspension arrangements, publication requirements and employer notification duties. In addition, the Bill empowers the Department to authorise or require GTCNI to make its own rules on specified matters within this regulatory framework. Most of these regulation-making powers are subject to the negative resolution procedure.

7. The Committee notes the Department's commitment that regulations and commencement orders for Clauses 7 and 8 will only be brought forward following appropriate consultation with the teaching profession and key stakeholders.
8. Throughout its scrutiny, the Committee engaged extensively with Departmental officials, representatives from the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland, teaching unions and other stakeholders. Evidence highlighted differing views on governance arrangements, particularly the removal of elected members and the potential implications for the Council's independence. The Committee also examined the scope of delegated powers, the balance between regulations and internal rules and the suitability of negative resolution procedures for key regulatory matters. The Committee's deliberations were informed by written submissions, oral evidence, legal advice and comparative research. This report reflects the issues raised and areas identified for ongoing monitoring as the reforms progress.

## Background

9. The GTCNI was established under Chapter 1 of Part 6 of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 (the 1998 Order). It is the professional body for teachers in Northern Ireland. Under the 1998 Order, its core functions are to register and regulate teachers (Articles 35 and 36) and to advise the Department of Education and employing authorities on entry standards to the profession, teacher training and career development, performance management and standards of teaching and conduct (Article 37).
10. GTCNI is an Arm's Length Body (ALB) of the Department of Education and is accountable to the Minister of Education and the Northern Ireland Assembly.
11. GTCNI was originally established with a 33-member leadership council comprising 14 elected teachers, five teaching union representatives, ten nominees from educational stakeholder bodies and four departmental public appointees. It is understood this representative model was intended to ensure that the Council's decision-making reflected a broad understanding of the needs of the education system.
12. In 2015, GTCNI became responsible for regulating the teaching profession. Subsequent legal advice and emerging case law identified weaknesses in the legislative basis for regulation, leaving GTCNI unable to exercise these powers as originally intended.
13. The Explanatory and Financial Memorandum (EFM) accompanying the Bill notes that the Council has been operating in special measures for seven of the last nine years, up to December 2024, with additional support and oversight provided in an effort to stabilise the organisation.
14. In 2021, DE commissioned BTMM to conduct an independent review of the effectiveness of the Council and its committees following concerns around its operations, media reports of bullying within the organisation and governance issues dating back to 2015, including 13 resignations from the Board between 2019 and 2021.
15. BTMM found that:

- the legislative basis of the GTCNI was weak and did not allow GTCNI to adequately carry out its regulatory functions;
  - the governance model was “highly ineffective”;
  - the Council had done little to promote or support teacher professional development; and
  - there were significant operational problems around the delivery model for registration.
16. BTMM concluded that the Council, in its then form, was incapable of rectifying its deficiencies and required fundamental change, including dissolution and the establishment of an alternative delivery mechanism. It advised that this would require winding-up legislation, consideration of where statutory functions should transfer, and transitional arrangements to support the change.<sup>10</sup>
17. On receipt of the BTMM report, the then Minister of Education, Michelle McIlveen, made a statement to the Assembly to say that she was standing down the Council with immediate effect. Since that decision, GTCNI, operating under interim leadership arrangements, has continued to deliver its functions under Departmental oversight.
18. The General Teaching Council (Directions) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 added the General Teaching Council to Article 101 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986, which lists the organisations to which DE can give directions.
19. During the interim period, the Department undertook consultations and engagement exercises which indicated that stakeholders viewed all of GTCNI’s statutory functions as important to maintaining the quality of the teaching workforce, and that all existing functions should therefore be retained. The Department noted, however, that not all consultation exercises attracted high levels of engagement.
20. The Department advised that although a wide range of options was considered, the business case analysis concluded that reforming the existing body

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<sup>10</sup> Department of Education (2021) [General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland – Board Effectiveness Review](#)

represented the most effective way to deliver the required functions at lower cost and with reduced operational risk.

21. The Committee was advised that the Minister therefore agreed to modify the Department's preferred approach and confirmed that the GTCNI would be retained and reformed. As legislative change is required to implement this approach, the Department prepared a Bill to give effect to the necessary reforms.
22. Officials from the Department provided the Committee with an oral briefing on the Bill as part of its pre-legislative scrutiny on 8 October 2025.
23. The Department advised the Committee that the Bill would provide for:
  - the constitution of Council;
  - new investigatory and fitness-to-practice panels;
  - disciplinary sanctions;
  - the creation of two criminal offences;
  - provisional registration (subject to consultation);
  - revalidation of registration (subject to consultation);
  - the ability to share information with other regulators; and
  - the ability to act on referrals from the public.
24. The Committee noted that the final two functions (i.e. sharing information with other regulators and acting on referrals from the public) do not appear to have been included explicitly in the Bill as introduced.
25. The Department outlined the main changes that the Bill will introduce to the leadership and governance arrangements of GTCNI. It advised that the 33-member council will be replaced by a 12-member Board, with all members appointed through a public appointments process based on skills, experience and the ability to contribute to strategic direction, governance and oversight.
26. It is understood that this aligns with the BTMM review recommendation that any future replacement body should comprise 10-12 members exclusively appointed

through a public appointments process.<sup>11</sup> Officials advised this position was reinforced through engagement with the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland (CPANI), with whom the Department has engaged throughout the development of the Bill.

27. The Department also stated its intention that half of the positions on the new Board will be filled by currently registered teachers, ensuring continued professional representation.
28. In a business case provided to the Committee, the Department noted this option may not be supported by the profession, as Northern Ireland teaching unions had previously expressed opposition to the establishment of a body subject to DE direction in which elected teachers do not hold a majority on the Board.
29. The Department stated that GTCNI will continue to be funded through annual registration fees. It is understood that all teachers in grant-aided schools must be registered as a condition of employment.<sup>12</sup> The Department advised that teacher registration and regulation help safeguard the quality of the teaching workforce and that annual fees enable these functions to be delivered without adding pressure to the wider education budget. It was noted registration fees are charged by professional bodies and regulators across the United Kingdom (UK).
30. DE officials indicated that it will be for the reconstituted GTCNI Board to review the organisation's financial position and determine whether any future fee increase is required. At Second Stage, the Minister of Education stated that, in giving GTCNI greater autonomy over its financial future, the Department would no longer have an approval role in the setting of registration fees.
31. The Committee was advised that the Bill will provide for a new class of provisional registration for teachers. This would allow individuals whose initial teaching qualification has minor deficits against GTCNI standards to teach for a defined period. At the end of that period, individuals would either progress to full

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<sup>11</sup> Department of Education (2021) [General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland – Board Effectiveness Review](#)

<sup>12</sup> As provided for by s. 35(3)The Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 amended by The Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 2003

registration once the identified deficits have been addressed or lose their provisional registration and become ineligible to continue teaching.

32. It is also understood that the Bill will enable GTCNI to require teachers to periodically revalidate their registration by demonstrating their continued participation in professional learning. The Department advised that reflective practice and ongoing professional development are already integral to initial teacher education, and that most regulated professions require members to show that their knowledge and skills remain up to date.

## Committee Approach

33. The Committee took oral evidence from Department of Education officials on the General Teaching Council Bill on 8 October 2025, ahead of its introduction in the Assembly.
34. The General Teaching Council Bill (NIA 23/22-27) was introduced in the Assembly on 24 November 2025 and the Second Stage was held on 2 December 2025. The Committee Stage commenced on 3 December 2025. On the same date, the Committee agreed a motion to extend the Committee Stage. The Assembly subsequently agreed the extension to 27 May 2026 on 12 January 2026.
35. The Committee launched a call for evidence on 12 December 2025 and closed on 6 February 2026. In addition to publishing a media signposting notice in the *'Belfast Telegraph,' 'Irish News'* and *'News Letter'* seeking written evidence on the Bill, the Committee wrote to a range of key stakeholders inviting views. Eight substantive responses were received. Copies of the written submissions from respondents who consented to publication are included at Appendix 3.
36. During the period covered by this report, the Committee considered the Bill and related issues at 12 meetings. The Minutes of Proceedings are included at Appendix 1.
37. The Committee had before it the General Teaching Council Bill and the Explanatory and Financial Memorandum (EFM) that accompanied the Bill.
38. The Committee took oral evidence on the Bill from the Northern Ireland Teachers' Council (14 January 2026), the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (21 January 2026) and Department of Education officials (28 January 2026 and 11 March 2026).
39. The Committee explored the issues with the Department both in writing and in oral evidence sessions. Papers and correspondence from the Department of Education on the provisions of the Bill and proposed delegated legislation are at Appendix 4.

40. The Committee considered advice from the Northern Ireland Assembly Examiner of Statutory Rules (4 February 2026 and 22 April 2026) on the regulation-making powers in the Bill. The Examiner considered the Bill and the Explanatory and Financial Memorandum and was satisfied with the rule-making powers provided for in the Bill.
41. The Committee also received advice and considered written information from the Northern Ireland Assembly Legal Services (15 April 2026) on the interaction between the Bill and the European Convention on Human Rights and Article 2(1) of the Windsor Framework.
42. The Committee deliberated informally and undertook informal scrutiny of the Bill on 29 April 2026 and 6 May 2026. It undertook formal clause by clause scrutiny of the Bill on 13 May 2026. The Committee considered a draft of its report on the Committee Stage (i.e. this report) at its meeting of 20 May 2026 and ordered that the report be published.
43. Minutes of Proceedings are at Appendix 1. The Minutes of Evidence are included at Appendix 2. Written submissions are included at Appendix 3. Submissions from the Department are at Appendix 4. Other relevant papers are at Appendix 5. A list of witnesses to the Committee Stage is provided at Appendix 6.

## Consideration of the Bill

44. The Committee's consideration and deliberation on the clauses of the Bill were informed by the research, written, oral and signed evidence it received, as outlined in the previous section. Throughout its scrutiny, the Committee maintained ongoing engagement with the Department and explored the issues raised in evidence during oral evidence sessions and through correspondence.
45. The DE Business Case for replacement options for GTCNI outlines ten options and states that its preferred option is to "*retain GTCNI, legislate to amend Board structure and enable regulation function to be fully implemented*".
46. The Department set out that this option has several advantages. It meets all identified Critical Success Factors, enabling the delivery of the core functions of GTCNI that consultation and engagement exercises have indicated are essential or beneficial to the teaching profession, schools and the wider education sector. The Department reported that it would also address most of the outworkings of the BTMM Review and would provide for restored professional representation on the Council.
47. The Department further indicated that, although this option would still require substantial and complex legislative work to address teacher regulation and revise leadership structures, it would avoid the additional work associated with planning for and managing the orderly closure of one ALB while establishing a functionally identical replacement.
48. The Department stated that this option acknowledges recent improvements in GTCNI's performance and governance and would address the BTMM recommendation to amend the size and structure of the board and to use a public appointments process to ensure that the board has the necessary skills and competence to support effective decision-making.
49. The Department also identified several disadvantages associated with this option. It does not align with the previous Minister's decision to dissolve and replace the GTCNI and would therefore require a superseding Ministerial decision. DE indicated that, if GTCNI were to resume responsibility for investigations and panel hearings, additional staffing capacity and regulatory

expertise would be required. This may necessitate a review of the annual registration fee to ensure that any additional regulatory costs are met by the profession, although DE noted that the fee is likely to be reviewed under any future option, an issue Members may wish to keep under ongoing consideration.

50. The Department recognised that this option may not be supported by the profession, as Northern Ireland teaching unions have previously expressed opposition to the establishment of a body subject to departmental direction in which elected teachers do not hold a majority on the Board.
51. The Northern Ireland Teachers' Council (NITC) gave evidence to the Committee on 14 January 2026, making clear its opposition to the Bill as introduced. It stated that:

*“The NITC believes that the General Teaching Council Bill will still leave the GTC operating under the direction of a Minister, which means that it will not be independent or representative of the profession. Teachers already ask why they have to pay for a body that is not fully functional. They will find it hard to stomach paying for a non-departmental public body in future. Calling it a council gives the impression that it will have some decision-making powers, whereas it will have nothing of the sort. The Bill is unambiguous: the new GTCNI will simply carry out the Minister's wishes.”*

52. The Committee noted that the central issue raised by the NITC relates to the perceived lack of independence of the reconstituted GTCNI under the governance arrangements proposed in the Bill.
53. Giving oral evidence on 28 January 2026, the Department stated that the Bill establishes a new Board with the same degree of operational independence as any other ALB in Northern Ireland. The Department rejected the assertion that the Bill would constrain GTCNI and make it subservient to the Department.
54. The Department noted that the BTMM review identified a lack of skills and experience as a key factor in previous dysfunction and recommended that no single group should hold a majority in future decision-making. It advised the Bill

reflects this by providing for a Board in which registered teachers will form half of the membership, ensuring a strong professional voice without dominance.

55. The Department acknowledged union concerns that teachers should not be required to fund a body that is not wholly independent. It emphasised that professional bodies exist to regulate entry to the profession, uphold standards, protect the public and safeguard the reputation of the profession, and that these collective functions are typically funded through registration fees. This model, the Department noted, is standard across comparable professional regulators.
56. In correspondence on 9 March 2026, the Department stated it does not accept that GTCNI's status as an ALB compromises in any meaningful manner its operational independence in the delivery of any of its statutory functions.
57. The Department advised the Bill will give GTCNI autonomy:
  - in setting its Standing Orders;
  - in setting its Code of Conduct and Practice;
  - in setting its qualification standards and rules;
  - over its regulatory rules and internal processes;
  - in the composition and operation of its regulatory panels; and
  - in controlling its own staffing, finances and fees.
58. The General Teaching Council Bill has 16 clauses and is subdivided into four areas:
  - The Council's constitution and general functions
  - Matters relating to the registration of teachers
  - Miscellaneous
  - General

## **Clause-by-clause consideration of the Bill**

### **The Council's constitution and general functions**

#### **Clause 1 - Membership**

59. Clause 1 amends the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998, which empowers the Department to constitute the GTCNI. It removes the requirement for regulations to include representatives from specified stakeholder groups. Under the 1998 Order, the Council's membership was drawn from teachers, employing authorities, transferors and trustees of grant-aided schools, teacher training institutions, industry and commerce, and any other interests considered relevant by the Department. Removing this list enables a revised governance model based on skills-based appointments.
60. This Clause gives effect to the BTMM Review recommendation that any future replacement body should comprise 10 to 12 members, all appointed through a public appointments process. Departmental officials advised the Committee that this approach was reinforced through engagement with the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland, with whom the Department has engaged throughout the development of the Bill.
61. Clause 1 also removes references to the election of members. This reflects the Department's intention that all members of the reconstituted body will be appointed on the basis of skills and experience, consistent with standard public appointments practice.
62. In a briefing paper of 28 January 2026, the Department advised that Regulations will provide for a 12-member Board, including six teachers registered with GTCNI, ensuring a strong professional voice. It noted that placing this level of detail on the face of the Bill would have required additional primary legislation to amend the Board's composition, whereas setting it in Regulations allows greater flexibility within the wider governance framework.
63. In correspondence of 10 March 2026, CPANI outlined its role in providing advice, support and training on the Code of Practice for Ministerial Public

Appointments, determining requests for exceptions, and allocating Independent Assessors to recruitment exercises.

64. CPANI clarified that it does not advise on the skills or experience required for individual public appointments; skills audits are the responsibility of the lead department. It also noted that performance reviews are carried out by the relevant department and the ALB to which the individual has been appointed.
65. CPANI confirmed that previous removal from office may affect eligibility for appointment or reappointment. Such decisions are either taken at the sift stage, where disqualification criteria apply, or at interview when declarations of interest and standards in public life are considered. In both cases, the decision rests with the competition panel and appointing department.
66. Stakeholder evidence highlighted differing views on the governance model proposed in the Bill. The NITC supports the principle of an independent registration body but argues that the Bill does not deliver this, as the reconstituted Council would operate under Ministerial direction.
67. NITC also raised concerns about employer representatives on the Council and expressed mixed views on whether membership should reflect all school sectors, reflecting wider debates on professional representation.
68. In oral evidence, the NITC expressed opposition to appointment-only membership stating:  
  
*“We profoundly disagree with the removal of elections. In most other professional bodies, half the members are appointed and half are elected. The Bill removes that entirely. The argument that is used is that teachers elected the wrong people, but, to be honest, that is not a good argument.”*
69. The Committee also considered comparative research from RaISe on council membership in regulatory bodies in Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland.

**Table 1: Council membership in regulatory bodies elsewhere**

<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>No. of members</b>	<b>Composition</b>
England: TRA	N/A  A regulator only, functioning as an executive agency of the Department for Education	N/A
Wales: EWC	14 Council members  An independent regulator of education practitioners.	7 public appointments  7 teaching union nominations (from 13 organisations)
Scotland: GTC Scotland	37 Council members  A wholly independent regulator.	19 elected registered teachers  11 educational stakeholder nominees  7 lay members appointed by an independent Appointments Committee
Republic of Ireland: Teaching Council	37 Council members  An independent regulator.	11 primary teachers: nine elected and two teacher union nominees  11 post-primary teachers: seven elected and four teacher union nominees  2 nominated by colleges of education  2 nominated by specified third-level bodies

		<p>4 nominated by school management (two primary and two post-primary)</p> <p>2 nominated by parents' associations (one primary and one post-primary)</p> <p>5 nominated by the Minister for Education, including one representing each of IBEC and ICTU.</p>
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81. Teaching unions raised further concerns. NASUWT and UTU oppose the removal of elections under Clause 1(b). NASUWT suggested an amendment requiring that 50% of Council members be elected from across the profession. NAHT(NI) argued for retaining a statutory requirement for practitioner representation and proposed a stabilisation period with trade union nominations before moving to elections. UTU also argued that teaching trade unions should have representation on the new Board.
82. The Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) supported the proposed 12-member structure, with six GTCNI-registered teachers, and the use of the Public Appointments process.
83. In correspondence of 9 March 2026, the Department advised that the governance model mirrors that of the Education Workforce Council (EWC) in Wales, which it said combines operational independence with government control over Board appointments.
84. The Department noted that unlike the teaching councils in Scotland and the Republic of Ireland, the EWC does not include elected teacher members.
85. In reserving six of the proposed 12 Board places for registered teachers, the Department stated that it is following the Welsh model, balancing teacher representation with the need for a Board capable of effective, skills based regulatory governance.

86. The Department advised that appointees will serve terms of up to four years, may be reappointed in line with CPANI guidance, and may be removed in specified circumstances. It advised that regulations will also address vacancies, the appointment and resignation of the Chairperson, and the establishment of committees and sub-committees, including the ability to delegate functions and appoint non-Board members.

### **Clause 2 - Rules relating to the Council's constitution**

87. Clause 2 substitutes a new paragraph 1(3) in Schedule 1 to the 1998 Order. The revised provision clarifies that the Department's power to make regulations about the constitution of GTCNI includes the power to require or authorise the Council to make its own rules on constitutional matters.
88. The Committee was advised that Clause 2 corrects a legislative gap in the Department's authorisation for GTCNI to make its own rules, a provision that mirrors the approach taken in Clause 9. The Department has indicated that it does not anticipate delegating any additional powers to GTCNI beyond those identified.
89. According to the Delegated Powers Memorandum (DPM), these rules may cover issues such as tenure of members and the establishment of committees and sub-committees, operating within the wider regulatory governance framework.
90. The Committee sought clarification on the intended division between matters to be set out in regulations subject to Assembly scrutiny and those to be left to internal rules made by the Council.
91. The Department advised that regulations made under Clause 2 will set out the core constitutional framework for the GTCNI. These will include the composition of the 12-member Board (six registered teachers and six non-teachers), terms of office of up to four years, eligibility for reappointment, resignation and removal procedures, arrangements for filling vacancies, the appointment and resignation of the Chairperson, and the establishment of committees and sub-committees. The Department stated that these matters will be subject to

Assembly scrutiny and will provide the statutory framework within which the Council must operate.

92. In oral evidence on 11 March 2026, the Department noted that while the regulations will be subject to negative resolution, it intends to present them to the Committee for scrutiny.
93. The Department further advised that, while regulations will set the overarching requirements, GTCNI will determine its own internal rules on operational matters, such as the size of committees and procedural arrangements set out in Standing Orders. It stated that fundamental aspects of tenure, such as maximum terms, will continue to be governed by CPANI requirements, but GTCNI will have discretion to set additional expectations, for example minimum-attendance levels.
94. Stakeholder evidence highlighted differing views on the scope of the powers delegated under Clause 2. NASUWT and UTU oppose the provision, arguing that it represents an inappropriate delegation of responsibility for fundamental constitutional matters of the GTCNI. NASUWT noted that the amendment to paragraph 1(3) of the 1998 Order replaces a power that regulations “*may authorise the Council to make provision*” with a power that regulations “*may require or authorise the Council to make provision by rules*”. It suggested the introduction of “*may require*” to be a significant shift that would allow the Department to direct GTCNI, undermining its independence.
95. UTU similarly argued that Clause 2 would permit the Department to authorise GTCNI to determine key aspects of its own constitution through internal rules rather than through regulations subject to democratic scrutiny. It expressed concern that this could reduce transparency and weaken external oversight within the wider regulatory governance framework.
96. NAHT(NI) supported delegating internal governance matters such as tenure and committee structures to GTCNI, but emphasised the need for safeguards to ensure transparency, accountability and good governance. It submitted that rules made by GTCNI should require Departmental approval and be published openly to maintain confidence in the regulator.

97. The Committee sought the Department's assessment of the impact of the removal of the words "*require or*" from Clause 2. In correspondence, the Department advised that removing "*require or*" would limit its ability to direct GTCNI to make rules on specific matters, with the result that any mandatory requirements would instead need to be set out in more detailed regulations that would be subject to more frequent Committee scrutiny.

### **Clause 3 – Sub-Committees**

98. Clause 3 amends paragraph 1 of Schedule 1 to the 1998 Order to clarify that the Department's power to make regulations about the constitution of the Council includes the power to authorise or require GTCNI to establish sub-committees, and to authorise or require committees of GTCNI to establish sub-committees. It also makes consequential amendments across Schedule 1 to insert references to these structures, ensuring a clear legal basis for their creation.
99. Clause 3 widens the scope of the existing delegated powers under paragraphs 1(1) and 1(2) of Schedule 1 to the 1998 Order by enabling functions conferred by regulations or rules to be exercised not only by the Council but also by committees and sub-committees. The DPM states this is intended to provide a legally robust basis for establishing such structures in support of any of the Council's functions within the wider regulatory governance framework.
100. Regulations made under Clause 3 will be subject to the negative resolution procedure under Article 90(1) of the 1998 Order.
101. The Department's 2022 Consultation Document recorded that the previous Council operated four committees:
- Policy, Registration and Regulation Committee (PRRC);
  - Finance and General Purposes Committee (F&GPC);
  - Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC);
  - Human Resources Committee (HRC).

Members were appointed to these committees on the basis of their interests, skills and experience, and each committee elected a Chair and Vice-Chair to direct its work.

102. Stakeholders expressed differing views on the effect of Clause 3. UTU opposed the provision, arguing that it would extend delegated governance powers in a way that could weaken accountability and oversight. It suggested that the Clause could enable the creation of multiple committees and sub-committees through internal arrangements rather than through transparent, regulated or elected structures, and maintained that governance structures should instead be set out in regulations following consultation with GTCNI members.
103. NAHT(NI) supported the delegation of internal governance matters, noting that committees and sub-committees are essential for specialist functions such as disciplinary hearings, registration and standards oversight. However, it emphasised that flexibility must be balanced with safeguards to ensure transparency, proportionality and appropriate professional representation within the wider regulatory governance framework

#### **Clause 4 – Membership of committees and sub-committees**

104. Clause 4 inserts two paragraphs into Schedule 1 to the 1998 Order to make clear that regulations may provide for Council committees and sub-committees to consist of, or include, individuals who are not members of the Council. According to the EFM, this is intended to enable the Council to draw on specialist external expertise.
105. The second inserted paragraph provides that any committee or sub-committee established to exercise functions under Schedule 1A (Disciplinary Powers of the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland, introduced by Clause 11) must consist solely of individuals who are not members of the Council. The EFM explains that this is to ensure that decisions relating to teachers' fitness to practise are not placed in conflict with recent case law concerning the involvement of members of regulatory bodies in professional fitness-to-practise decisions, an issue linked to the wider regulatory independence framework.
106. In written evidence, the UTU opposed the Clause, arguing that allowing committees and sub-committees to be composed entirely of non-Council members could weaken professional insight, transparency and confidence in decision-making. It maintained that reforms should ensure a balanced approach that protects legal compliance while retaining meaningful professional

representation within the regulatory process, consistent with wider regulatory governance principles.

107. NAHT(NI) and the ASCL supported the Clause. NAHT(NI) emphasised the need for education-sector expertise among external members, alongside clear criteria, training and transparency measures such as publishing committee membership and terms of reference. ASCL agreed that requiring disciplinary committees to comprise only non-Council members would help ensure appropriate independence.
108. In correspondence of 9 March 2026, the Department noted that under the previous Council, a non-Board member with audit and public-sector governance experience was appointed to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee, strengthening the limited expertise in these areas among Council members. It indicated that similar circumstances may arise for the new Board, where additional expertise in areas such as law, accounting, human resources or public-sector governance would be advantageous.
109. The Department advised that the detailed arrangements for panel membership will be a matter for GTCNI to determine. It is envisaged that GTCNI will recruit a large pool of suitably qualified teachers and lay members to form a bank of individuals who can be appointed to interim suspension, investigatory and fitness-to-practise panels. This is intended to ensure timely case handling, adequate panel availability and that no panel member sits on more than one panel considering the same case. The Department indicated that operational detail will be developed by GTCNI in consultation with the profession, consistent with wider regulatory governance principles.
110. In correspondence of 23 April 2026, the GTCNI advised that the specialist Committees established under Schedule 1A will be drawn from a pool of external professional associates, recruited using approaches consistent with other regulatory bodies and approved by the GTCNI Board. Committees are expected to include a mix of registered teachers, lay members and a legal representative, with safeguards to protect the integrity of decision-making, including prohibiting any individual from serving on more than one Committee in relation to the same case and requiring declarations of potential conflicts of

interest. Officials indicated that the detailed procedures governing these Committees will be developed by GTCNI in consultation with the profession and other stakeholders, drawing on learning from neighbouring jurisdictions to ensure processes are robust, fair and practical.

111. The Department stated that, based on advice from the Office of the Legislative Counsel and the Departmental Solicitor's Office, it is confident that the Bill fully addresses the regulatory and disciplinary weaknesses present in the current legislative framework.

112. It is understood that across the four jurisdictions, disciplinary panels generally comprise three to five members, with a mix of professional and lay representation and access to independent legal advice. Key features include:

**TRA Professional Conduct Panels (England):** three members recruited through a public appointments process: a teacher (or recent former teacher), a layperson, and a third member who may be a former teacher. Panels are supported by an independent legal adviser. Recommendations on Prohibition Orders are made to the Secretary of State.

**EWC Panels (Wales):** an Investigating Committee considers complaints in private; Fitness to Practise Committees hear cases with at least three members, including at least one registered member and one layperson. Panels are supported by an independent legal adviser. Sanctions include Reprimands, Conditional Registration Orders, Suspension Orders and Prohibition Orders.

**GTC Scotland Panels:** at least three members, the majority being registered teachers or lecturers, with at least one layperson. Panels are supported by a servicing officer and an independent legal adviser. Sanctions include Reprimands, Conditional Registration Orders and Removal.

**Teaching Council Disciplinary Panels (Republic of Ireland):** panels of three to five members drawn from the Disciplinary Committee.

## **Clause 5 – Delegation of functions**

113. Clause 5 substitutes a new paragraph 7 in Schedule 1 to the 1998 Order. The revised paragraph enables GTCNI to delegate its functions to a wider range of persons than is currently permitted. In particular, it allows delegation to any member of GTCNI (rather than only the chair), to any member of staff (rather than only the registrar), and to any sub-committee (in addition to any committee).
114. The Department's briefing note of 28 January 2026 outlined that Clause 5 allows for functions to be delegated to a broad range of persons within the organisation. It advised this change to the 1998 Order will assist with timely decision-making by avoiding the need to have every decision ratified by GTCNI's Board.
115. In correspondence, the Department advised delegation will be an operational matter for GTCNI to determine. If the Board has concerns about a proposed delegation, it is not required to agree to it; and if an agreed delegation later proves problematic, the Board will be able to review and rescind it.
116. The Department also indicated that monitoring will be an operational responsibility for GTCNI. The Board will be expected to monitor operational performance and review working arrangements as appropriate, consistent with wider governance and delegation principles.
117. In oral evidence to the Committee, the NITC expressed caution about the extent to which GTCNI may delegate functions within the organisation without referral to the Board, highlighting the need to maintain appropriate oversight within the wider governance and delegation framework.
118. UTU opposes the Clause, arguing that it significantly broadens GTCNI's powers of delegation by enabling substantial functions to be exercised by individual members, staff or sub-committees without direct Board oversight. It expressed concern that such dilution of collective decision-making could undermine accountability, consistency and transparency in decisions with serious consequences for the profession.

119. NAHT(NI) supported wider delegation to improve efficiency and responsiveness but emphasised that this must be accompanied by strong accountability safeguards to prevent over-delegation and ensure consistency. It proposed clear limits on the delegation of high-stakes functions, the publication of delegation protocols setting out which functions may be delegated and under what conditions, and mandatory reporting to the Board on delegated decisions.

### **Clause 6 – Remuneration and allowances**

120. Clause 6 replaces paragraph 8 of Schedule 1 to the 1998 Order with a new provision. While the existing paragraph deals only with allowances, the revised paragraph gives GTCNI the power to pay remuneration and allowances to its members. It also permits the remuneration of non-members serving on committees or sub-committees, provided they are not already remunerated members of GTCNI or paid staff. The EFM states that allowances such as mileage and subsistence may be paid to any member of any committee or sub-committee, aligning the arrangements with wider public body remuneration practice.

121. Stakeholders expressed a range of views on remuneration. NITC supported reimbursement of expenses but opposed remuneration, reflecting its position within the wider public-sector governance context. NASUWT rejected the Clause on the basis that substitute cover for teachers would already be funded, making additional payments unnecessary.

122. By contrast, ASCL, NAHT(NI) and UTU supported the aims of the Clause. ASCL and NAHT(NI) viewed remuneration as consistent with good governance practice and helpful in attracting individuals with the necessary skills and expertise. NAHT(NI) emphasised that any payments should be proportionate, transparent and subject to public accountability, proposing a remuneration framework or cap, a dedicated pay committee, and published policies and annual reports. It also highlighted the importance of travel and subsistence allowances and recommended periodic review to ensure remuneration remains appropriate and sustainable.

123. The Department advised by correspondence that decisions on remuneration will be an operational matter for GTCNI, noting CPANI's view that remuneration can

help attract high-quality applicants for Board roles. It noted that any payments are expected to align with levels in comparable public-sector bodies and with Department of Finance guidance, consistent with wider public-sector governance principles.

124. The Department clarified that no formal remuneration policy will be set in advance, but that remuneration levels will be published as part of the public appointments process, and GTCNI will continue to disclose all Board member emoluments through its Annual Report and Accounts. It also confirmed that daily rates for specialist non-members appointed to committees will be determined by the GTCNI Board following a skills audit, and that anticipated costs could not be included in the Business Case, consistent with wider public-sector governance principles.

## **Matters relating to the registration of teachers**

### **Clause 7 - Provisional registration**

125. Clause 7 amends Article 36 of the 1998 Order, which provides the Department with the power to make regulations relating to the registration of teachers. The EFM asserts that the amendment removes any doubt that the Department may, through those regulations, authorise GTCNI to provisionally register individuals whose qualifications contain minor deficiencies against GTCNI's qualification requirements.
126. The EFM explains that provisional registration would allow such individuals to work as teachers for a defined period, during which they must demonstrate that the identified deficits have been remedied in order to obtain full registration.
127. The Department advised the Committee that this provision mirrors similar arrangements elsewhere in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland and is intended to ensure that rigid qualification rules do not become a barrier to teaching in Northern Ireland. It explained that the Clause will allow individuals with minor qualification deficits to be provisionally registered while they work to remedy those deficits.

128. Any regulations made under Clause 7 will be subject to the negative resolution procedure under Article 90(1) of the 1998 Order.
129. The DPM states that the Department has committed to consulting with the teaching profession and other relevant stakeholders before implementing this provision.
130. The Department advised that the timing of the consultation on provisional registration remains unknown. This will be determined by the Department and the GTCNI once the Bill has been implemented and all of GTCNI's statutory functions are operating efficiently.
131. The Department advised that it considers GTCNI to be best placed to undertake this consultation and to develop proposals that carry the confidence of the profession. It stated that only once clear proposals are presented to, and accepted by, the Department will it consider bringing forward the necessary delegated legislation to bring this power into effect.
132. The Committee sought clarification on whether the regulations will set limits on the duration of provisional registration.
133. The Department advised the Committee that provisional registration is not expected to affect the overall number of applications to GTCNI. It informed the Committee that at present, applicants who do not meet qualification requirements are refused registration. Under the new system, these individuals may instead be considered for provisional registration if they meet GTCNI's criteria. The Department advised that decisions on how provisional registrants will be monitored, what constitutes a defined period of time and how a minor deficit will be interpreted will be operational matters for GTCNI to determine following consultation with the profession.
134. Stakeholders expressed a range of views on the regulation-making power in Clause 7 and the introduction of provisional registration. NITC, in oral evidence, considered the power necessary as drafted but witnesses had mixed views on the principle of provisional registration. NASUWT supported Clause 7(a) but submitted that Clause 7(b) should be rejected on the basis that it would allow the Department to impose requirements on the Council, which it believed would

undermine the Council's independence within the wider regulatory governance framework.

135. UTU was broadly supportive of Clause 7, viewing provisional registration as a proportionate and practical route into teaching for individuals with minor qualification gaps. It emphasised the need for clear, transparent guidance defining acceptable deficiencies, the criteria for provisional registration, and the evidence required for full registration, alongside a robust and accessible appeals mechanism to ensure fairness and consistency.
136. ASCL and NAHT(NI) also supported the Clause, noting that provisional registration could enhance workforce flexibility and help address recruitment and retention pressures, particularly in shortage subjects. ASCL cautioned that "provisional" status implies a need for supervision and mentoring to address identified deficiencies. It stressed that the Department must recognise the additional responsibilities this places on school leaders. NAHT(NI) recommended defining "minor deficiencies" in regulations, setting firm time limits for provisional registration, publishing criteria and processes, and introducing monitoring and reporting duties to prevent indefinite provisional status.
137. The Department advised that the proposed power to permit provisional registration for teachers with minor deficits in their initial teaching qualification reflects practice already in place in Wales, Scotland and the Republic of Ireland. It also noted that the proposed power to allow for periodic revalidation of a teacher's registration, based on continued participation in professional learning, would be similar to the Professional Update model used by the General Teaching Council for Scotland.
138. RaISe provided the Committee with comparative information about the provisional registration of teachers in other jurisdictions. As the TRA does not hold a register, this is not applicable in England.
139. In Scotland, the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) operates three categories of provisional registration: teachers who have qualified in Scotland; teachers with an equivalent qualification gained outside Scotland; and fully registered teachers seeking registration in an additional category.

140. In Wales, the Education (Wales) Act 2014 gives the EWC the power to register individuals on a provisional basis. According to the Explanatory Memorandum accompanying the Act, provisional registration may be appropriate where an individual is undertaking induction, beginning teacher training, or working towards a required qualification.
141. In the Republic of Ireland, the Teaching Council may grant registration with conditions where an applicant has not yet met all registration requirements. The conditions are recorded on the Register and set out in the Conditional Registration letter. If the teacher does not meet the specified conditions within the required timeframe, and no extension is granted, the registration will lapse.

### **Clause 8 – Further training**

142. The EFM explains that Clause 8 amends Article 36 of the 1998 Order to avoid doubt that the Department's regulation-making power under that Article includes the ability to require or authorise GTCNI to require registered teachers to periodically revalidate their professional standing by evidencing continued participation in teacher professional learning (continuing professional development). According to the EFM, this approach reflects revalidation mechanisms already used by teaching regulators across the UK and the Republic of Ireland and aligns with wider practice in comparable jurisdictions.
143. The Department has committed that regulations and commencement orders for Clause 8 will only be brought forward following appropriate consultation with the teaching profession and key stakeholders.
144. Any regulations made under Clause 8 will be subject to the negative resolution procedure under Article 90(1) of the 1998 Order.
145. Stakeholders expressed broad support for the principle of ongoing professional learning but raised significant concerns about how periodic revalidation would operate in practice. A shared theme across oral evidence from the NITC and written evidence from NASUWT, UTU, NAHT(NI) and ASCL was the need for clarity, proportionality, and adequate resourcing before any revalidation system is introduced.

146. Across teaching unions, there was strong agreement that any model must be manageable, fair, and properly supported, and that it must not impose unsustainable workload pressures on teachers or school leaders. NITC, UTU and NAHT(NI) all emphasised that revalidation must be distinct from employer functions, with safeguards to ensure it is supportive rather than punitive. UTU and NAHT(NI) also highlighted the need for accessible CPD opportunities, clear criteria, and flexible forms of evidence, noting that without these, mandatory revalidation could place undue burdens on the workforce.
147. The teaching unions differed in their assessment of the Clause's implications for governance and independence. NITC viewed the Clause as "problematic" due to uncertainty about the mechanism GTCNI would use and the open-ended nature of the power. NASUWT argued that the amendment would allow the Department, rather than an independent Council, to impose additional training requirements, which it considered inappropriate. UTU raised extensive concerns about who would decide when revalidation is required, what criteria would apply, and how evidence would be gathered, assessed and stored, warning of potential administrative burdens.
148. NAHT(NI) and ASCL focused on practical implementation, seeking clarity on expectations, responsibilities and timelines. NAHT(NI) called for guaranteed CPD resourcing, clear guidance, proportionate sanctions, and periodic review of the framework. ASCL sought clarity on who would be responsible for carrying out revalidation and highlighted the workload implications for school leaders.
149. The Department advised by correspondence that the timing of the consultation on revalidation is not yet known and will be determined by the Department and GTCNI once the Bill is implemented and GTCNI's statutory functions are operating effectively.
150. It set out that the intended purpose of periodic revalidation is to strengthen the teaching workforce by supporting teachers to keep their knowledge and skills up to date throughout their careers. As with provisional registration, it noted that decisions on when to progress this power will be led by GTCNI, which is expected to undertake the necessary consultation and develop the process.

151. The Department advised it will only consider bringing forward delegated Regulations and the Commencement Order once GTCNI can present fair, robust and cost-effective proposals.
152. The Committee was advised that operational decisions on the design, resourcing and management of revalidation will rest with GTCNI, including how professional learning is monitored and what model is adopted following consultation with the profession. The Department stated it does not anticipate that the legislation will create additional workload for teachers, noting that similar requirements exist across other regulated professions and typically involve evidencing participation in a minimum level of professional learning over a set period.
153. The Department indicated it has no view on the level of professional learning that should be required, which will be for GTCNI to determine after considering other schemes and consulting the profession.
154. The Department also noted the Performance Review and Staff Development scheme implemented through the Board of Governors for schools, which is part of a teacher's annual review cycle. It confirmed that it is not intended that any professional learning requirement brought in by GTCNI will duplicate or replace this scheme.

#### **Clause 9 – Rules relating to registration**

155. Clause 9 substitutes a new paragraph (5) into Article 36 of the 1998 Order. The revised paragraph clarifies that the Department has the power to make regulations about any aspect of the registration of teachers.
156. The DPM states that Clause 9 provides a regulation-making power that would allow the Department to require or authorise GTCNI to require the Council to make internal rules on matters relating to teacher registration. The DPM advises that this could include a requirement for the Council to set qualification rules for entry to the register, aligning with wider registration governance practice.
157. These regulations are subject to the negative resolution procedure pursuant to Article 90(1) of the 1998 Order.

158. The Committee was advised that Clause 9 addresses a legislative gap in the Department's ability to authorise GTCNI to make its own rules. The Department advised that the Departmental Solicitor's Office (DSO) had identified the wording of the existing Article 36(5) as potentially insufficient to provide a robust rule-making power for GTCNI. Explicit rule-making powers were therefore considered necessary in new primary legislation, delivered through the replacement of Article 36(5).

159. The breadth of this provision prompted comment from the NITC during its evidence session on 14 January 2026, reflecting wider concerns about the scope of departmental regulation-making powers and their implications for GTCNI's autonomy.

*"Clause 9 is interesting, because it gives the Department the power to set out in regulations "any matter" relating to the registration of teachers that will be required or authorised to include in its rules. I say that that is interesting because it makes clear that GTCNI is entirely subservient to the Department. If that is the case, it is not morally justifiable to ask teachers to pay for it."*

160. NASUWT similarly argued that the Clause should be rejected, contending that an independent Council should determine registration requirements, not the Department.

161. UTU and NAHT(NI) supported Clause 9, considering it a necessary clarification of the Department's power to set out, through regulations, matters that GTCNI must include in its rules. UTU viewed this as an important safeguard that ensures key elements of registration, including qualification requirements, remain consistent and credible. NAHT(NI) agreed but stressed that the power must be exercised in a way that respects GTCNI's independence and involves meaningful consultation with the profession before new requirements are introduced.

162. NAHT(NI) also called for mandatory publication of all rules and regulations governing registration to ensure transparency, along with safeguards against overreach and periodic review of registration requirements to ensure they remain fair, relevant and aligned with workforce needs.

163. The Committee sought clarification on which aspects of teacher registration the Department intends to retain in regulations made under Article 36, as amended by Clause 9, and which matters it envisages may instead be set out in Council rules, noting that such rules would not be subject to Assembly procedure.
164. The Department explained that operational detail has been deliberately excluded from the Bill to give GTCNI greater flexibility to set its own qualification rules, codes of conduct and professional standards, while still operating within the framework of the primary legislation and supporting regulations. It stated that this approach is intended to support GTCNI in rebuilding confidence in its regulatory role, and that excessive prescriptiveness in legislation or subordinate regulations would risk constraining the Council's future effectiveness.
165. The Department further advised that Clause 9 sits within the heading "Matters relating to the registration of teachers", and that, as a matter of legislative convention, any regulations made under this Clause must relate solely to the registration function. It emphasised that the provision is therefore not as open-ended as it may initially appear.
166. In correspondence of 9 March 2026, the Department set out the matters it intends to retain in regulations under Article 36:
- the disqualification criteria for persons applying to be registered;
  - the notice of decision to grant or refuse and application for registration;
  - the right of the public to access certain information from the register; and
  - the authority for GTCNI to share information with employers, prospective employers and equivalent General Teaching Councils (or Secretary of State for Education) on registered teachers or an unregistered person about whom it maintains a record.
167. The Department outlined that the following matters are envisaged as being included in GTCNI's rules:
- the form, manner and documentary evidence required with an application for registration;

- the time period for a person appealing against a decision to refuse registration;
- the qualification required to be a registered teacher;
- the division of the register into separate parts;
- the restoration, alteration and transfer of entries on the register;
- the removal of entries from the register where the person has ceased to be eligible, not paid any required fees or other circumstances;
- the issuing of certificates of registration and the form of such certificates; and
- the information to be shared with employers, prospective employers and equivalent General Teaching Councils (or Secretary of State for Education) on registered teachers or an unregistered person about whom it maintains a record.

168. The Department advised it intends to retain the power to direct the Council under the General Teaching Council (Directions) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022.

169. In its commentary on draft subordinate regulations supporting the Bill, the Department provided a detailed statement of intention on the regulations it intends to bring forward. The Committee noted this reflects the Department's current position and may be subject to change as further legal advice is received.

170. The Department noted that holding an accepted teaching qualification will be only one factor considered when determining eligibility for registration, alongside other criteria such as disqualification grounds. It advised that the provision enabling GTCNI to create divisions within its database is a technical measure that allows it to maintain a single register while distinguishing between categories such as current teachers, retired teachers, lapsed registrants, refused applicants and those barred or otherwise ineligible to teach.

171. The Committee was advised that the ability for the public to confirm whether an individual is registered with GTCNI replicates an existing safeguard. The requirement to share information with the Secretary of State for Education, who oversees the TRA, and with other regulators across the UK and the Republic of

Ireland, is intended to prevent individuals from falsely claiming GTCNI registration in order to obtain registration or employment elsewhere.

172. The Committee asked the Department for its assessment of the impact of removing the words “*require or*” from the Clause.
173. The Department advised in correspondence of 11 May 2026 that Clause 9 was drafted to address a gap in existing legislation regarding GTCNI’s ability to make its own rules. In the absence of explicit rule-making powers, any rules developed by GTCNI for the delivery of its functions would be vulnerable to legal challenge. Clause 9 therefore provides the necessary explicit authority for GTCNI to make rules relating to the registration of teachers.
174. The Department advised that, following further DSO advice, the wording “*may require or authorise*” in Clause 9 reflects a standard legal formulation used when conferring rule-making powers on an ALB. It explained that the dual wording recognises two distinct circumstances. First, the Department may authorise GTCNI to make rules where it is appropriate for the Council to determine, in the efficient discharge of its functions, whether operational rules are needed. Second, the Department may require GTCNI to make rules on matters it considers must be addressed within the Council’s regulatory framework. The Department emphasised that neither authorised nor required rules are intended to prescribe the detailed content of GTCNI’s rules; rather, the formulation is designed to ensure that no important issue relating to the registration of teachers is left unaddressed.
175. The Department concluded that without the ability to require GTCNI to make rules on specified issues, the Department would instead need to set out those matters directly in regulations. It indicated that this would likely result in regulations becoming more detailed, complex and prescriptive than necessary, and would require repeated Committee scrutiny whenever points of operational detail needed to be amended.

## **Clause 10 – Offences**

176. This Clause inserts a new Article 35A into the 1998 Order, making it an offence for a person who is not registered with GTCNI under Article 35 to pretend, with intent to deceive, to be a registered teacher. Subsection (2) amends Article 36 to allow the Department, through regulations, to create offences and penalties. The EFM outlines that both offences are triable summarily only and carry a maximum fine at level 4 on the standard scale (£2,500).
177. Regulations under Article 36 that create an offence must be laid in draft and approved by the Assembly. Where such regulations are combined with regulations under Chapter 1 of Part 6 of the 1998 Order that would otherwise be subject to negative resolution, subsection (3) enables all provisions to proceed under the draft affirmative procedure, ensuring appropriate Assembly scrutiny of offence-creating regulations.
178. Stakeholders were broadly supportive of Clause 10, recognising that the creation of new offences helps protect the integrity of the profession and the registration system. UTU and NAHT(NI) supported the Clause, agreeing that criminalising deliberate misrepresentation of registration status or the provision of false information is appropriate, provided offences remain proportionate and subject to proper legislative scrutiny. UTU also welcomed the requirement for Assembly approval via the draft affirmative procedure, noting that this ensures transparency and democratic oversight of any offences or penalties created. In oral evidence, the NITC indicated it had no issue with the penalties for pretending to be a teacher.
179. NAHT(NI) considered the offence proportionate and consistent with practice in other jurisdictions, suggesting it would strengthen public confidence. It also recommended a series of safeguards, including: clear definitions of “false or misleading information”; proportionality measures to distinguish deliberate deception from genuine error; transparent enforcement procedures with rights of appeal; and alignment with natural justice principles to ensure fair and consistent application.

## **Clause 11 – Disciplinary powers**

180. It is understood that GTCNI currently exercises disciplinary powers under the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (Registration of Teachers) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015, which set out the framework for investigating and determining cases of alleged unacceptable professional conduct or serious professional incompetence. At present, the Council's statutory power is limited to removal from the register.
181. Clause 11 introduces a new Schedule 1A to the 1998 Order, clarifying and extending the disciplinary powers available to GTCNI. Through regulations made by the Department, Schedule 1A will enable GTCNI to impose a broader range of sanctions and to take action where a teacher is found guilty of unacceptable professional conduct, serious professional incompetence or a relevant criminal offence.
182. The DPM explains that the detail of the disciplinary framework is left to delegated legislation because the level of procedural specificity required is not appropriate for the face of the Bill and, in some cases, can only be finalised following consultation with the Council. It also notes that some procedural elements may require refinement after implementation to ensure they remain practical for ongoing use.
183. Paragraph 8 of Schedule 1A provides that regulations may authorise the delegation of functions and may require or authorise the Council to make rules on any matter for which regulations may be made under the Schedule. These regulation-making powers are subject to negative resolution, while Council rules are not subject to Assembly procedure.
184. Schedule 1A has eight sections:
1. Investigation, hearing and determination of disciplinary cases
  2. Disciplinary orders: general
  3. Conditional Registration Orders
  4. Suspension Orders
  5. Prohibition Orders
  6. Interim Suspension Orders

7. Appeals against interim suspension orders and disciplinary orders
8. Supplementary provision about regulations under this Schedule

185. Paragraph 2(1) of Schedule 1A gives the Department power to make regulations authorising GTCNI to impose disciplinary orders where a teacher is found guilty of unacceptable professional conduct, serious professional incompetence, or a relevant criminal offence. Regulations may also require the Council to notify the teacher of their right of appeal, publish relevant information, and inform the employing authority, which may be required to take appropriate steps. Disciplinary orders include a reprimand, a conditional registration order, a suspension order and a prohibition order.
186. A conditional registration order allows the Council to specify the steps a teacher must take to become competent, which may include training or other remedial actions undertaken at the teacher's own cost. The teacher may request a review of the order. Failure to comply may result in escalation to a suspension or prohibition order.
187. Paragraph 4(1) of Schedule 1A provides that where a suspension order is made, the person ceases to be eligible for registration under Article 35. If the teacher is currently on the register, they must be removed. Suspension may last for up to two years, during which the individual cannot work in a grant-aided school in Northern Ireland. Conditions for re-entry may also be specified.
188. A prohibition order makes a teacher ineligible for registration under Article 35. Any teacher already on the register must be removed for a minimum period of two years, after which they may apply for restoration.
189. Paragraph 6 of Schedule 1A provides that, through regulations, GTCNI may impose an interim suspension order where the evidence suggests a teacher is likely to be found guilty of unacceptable professional conduct, serious professional incompetence, or a relevant offence. Interim orders may last for up to 18 months and must be reviewed every six months. They may only be imposed where necessary for the protection of children, in the public interest, or in the interests of the teacher concerned.

190. Paragraph 7 of Schedule 1A requires that regulations confer a right of appeal to the High Court against any interim suspension order or disciplinary order made by GTCNI. The judgment of the High Court on such an appeal will be final.
191. The Bill also clarifies that a registered teacher is a teacher who is on the register or who has applied to be on it, and defines a relevant offence as: (a) in the case of a conviction in the UK, a criminal offence other than one having no material relevance to the person's fitness to be a registered teacher; or (b) in the case of a conviction elsewhere, an offence which, if committed in Northern Ireland, would constitute such an offence.
192. In oral evidence, NITC told the Committee that Clause 11 represents a significant expansion of the types of cases GTCNI will be able to consider. It emphasised the importance of ensuring that, in serious disciplinary matters where dismissal would previously have been expected, there is proper consideration of a teacher's capability and whether they should continue to teach. NITC noted that competency issues can be complex, particularly where they arise from factors outside a teacher's control, such as medical conditions. As these matters will depend on future regulations rather than the Bill itself, NITC sought greater clarity on how such cases will be handled.
193. NAHT(NI) advised it does not support Clause 11 as drafted. While it agrees that a clear and legally robust disciplinary framework is necessary and that public confidence requires serious misconduct, serious professional incompetence and relevant criminal convictions to be addressed fairly and transparently, it considers the current drafting deficient. In particular, NAHT(NI) highlighted the absence of a distinct impairment (health) pathway. It argued that without such a pathway, teachers with health-related capability issues risk being publicly found "guilty" in circumstances more appropriately addressed through a private health panel. NAHT(NI) also raised concerns about the lack of statutory timelines for hearings and appeals, warning that delays could undermine confidence in the system. It recommended proportionate and less-restrictive sanctions, practitioner representation on all panels with specialist training, privacy protections for health cases, anonymised learning summaries, safeguards for medical data, reasonable adjustments, access to support services, and

alignment with AccessNI and employer processes, supported by statutory guidance and periodic review.

194. UTU and the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) are broadly supportive of Clause 11 and the introduction of Schedule 1A. They consider a clear, proportionate and legally robust fitness-to-practise framework essential for maintaining professional standards and public confidence. UTU emphasised the importance of a graduated range of sanctions, appropriate procedural safeguards and a statutory right of appeal. It also stressed that the exercise of these significant disciplinary powers must be grounded in an independent GTCNI, free from political, departmental or Managing Authority influence, and sought assurance that regulations made under Clause 11 will reinforce that independence.
195. ASCL highlighted the need for statutory timeframes for investigations, noting that historic delays have harmed school morale and the wellbeing of those involved. It also sought clarity on the division of responsibility between GTCNI's investigative teams and employing authorities, cautioning that Principals should not be placed in the position of de facto investigators.
196. NICCY identified several areas where the Committee may wish to seek assurance regarding the intended effect of Schedule 1A. It interpreted paragraph 3 as establishing a civil, rather than criminal, standard of proof, which it supports. It also read paragraph 4 as permitting reliance on findings of the Disclosure and Barring Service without requiring further investigation. NICCY queried the drafting of paragraphs 4 and 5, noting that both appear to allow eligibility for registration to be regained before the full two-year period of a suspension or prohibition order has elapsed. It also observed that paragraph 4 appears to exclude potential applicants who fail to meet conditions attached to a suspension order within the two-year period, while paragraph 5 is less explicit about the circumstances in which a prohibited teacher may reapply.
197. In its commentary on draft subordinate regulations supporting the Bill, the Department provided a detailed statement of intention on the regulations it intends to bring forward. The Committee noted this reflects the Department's

current position and may be subject to change as further legal advice is received.

198. The Department advised that the regulations will provide a statutory basis for GTCNI to convene Interim Suspension, Investigating and Fitness to Practise Committees. They will require these committees to operate independently of the GTCNI Board and to include teacher representation to support informed and balanced decision-making.
199. The commentary indicates that individuals facing allegations will have the right to submit statements, give evidence under oath, make written submissions and be represented at all disciplinary hearings. The regulations also allow GTCNI to delegate evidence-gathering to officers where explicitly authorised, supporting timely and cost-effective investigations.
200. Comparative analysis provided by RaISe showed that TRA Professional Conduct Panels in England are supported by an independent legal adviser. The TRA can issue an Interim Prohibition Order if the alleged offence is deemed to be sufficiently serious.<sup>8</sup> It can then issue a Prohibition Order, following the Secretary of State's decision. This Order has a lifetime duration but can be reviewed.
201. The Committee also noted information from RaISe that outlined that GTC Scotland disciplinary panels are supported by a GTC Scotland Servicing Officer, who advises them on any procedural matters, and an independent Legal Assessor to advise on legal matters.
202. The Committee noted that, in Scotland, potential sanctions arising from a panel consideration meeting or full hearing include a reprimand, a conditional registration order, a combined reprimand and conditional registration order, or removal from the register where warranted. Panels may also decide that no further action is required or request additional information. Consideration meetings are held in private, and the teacher does not attend but receives the report 28 days in advance and may submit a response. Where the teacher disputes the findings, the case proceeds to a public hearing.

203. RaISe informed the Committee that the EWC in Wales publishes a Code of Professional Conduct and Practice setting out the standards expected of registrants. Employers are under a legal duty to make a referral to EWC if they have concerns about unprofessional conduct, offences or serious professional incompetence. EWC is responsible for investigating and determining allegations of unacceptable professional conduct, serious professional incompetence and relevant criminal offences.
204. Both EWC investigating committees and fitness to practise committees include at least three members, with at least one registered EWC member. Both are also supported by an independent legal adviser.
205. The commentary provided by the Department does not specify any legal adviser role for GTCNI committees. The proposed regulations will require all Disciplinary Committees to include both lay members and registered teacher members, while explicitly excluding Board members to ensure independence.
206. The Department advised that it intends regulations will enable GTCNI to take immediate protective action where an Interim Suspension Committee considers it necessary to prevent continued access to pupils.
207. The Department states that Interim Suspension Orders will normally last no longer than 18 months, with six-monthly reviews, but may be extended by the High Court where child-protection concerns require it. The Department further advises that individuals may request an initial review at any time.
208. The Department sets out that Interim Suspension Orders will lapse automatically when allegations are found to be unfounded, when a substantive Disciplinary Order is imposed, or when a High Court challenge succeeds.

## **Miscellaneous**

### **Clause 12 – Fees and charges to cover Council’s expenditure**

209. Clause 12 allows the Council to set fees for its services and requires it to ensure that, over time, income from such fees is sufficient to meet the costs of

exercising its statutory functions. According to the EFM, this is intended to enable fees to be set at levels that fund the full range of GTCNI's operations, support the long-term financial sustainability of the body, and remove the Department's approval role in fee setting.

210. In the Department's initial consultation, views on the payment of fees were mixed, with 42% of respondents agreeing that requiring teachers to pay fees was reasonable and 44% disagreeing. However, the small sample size (n=50) limits the strength of any conclusions that can be drawn from this finding.
211. If enacted as introduced, the Bill would give GTCNI new powers, exercised through regulations made by the Department, to regulate the teaching profession and impose a range of sanctions, including disciplinary and suspension proceedings. The Committee was advised by RaISe that following the introduction of these enhanced regulatory functions, the cost of delivering GTCNI's existing services may increase.
212. In its business case, the Department noted:
- “Once regulation of the profession commences, these costs will increase and it seems likely that these will need to be met through an increase in the teacher's fee(s).”*
213. The Business Case indicates that implementation of the Bill will require a material increase in GTCNI's operating budget, reflecting the expanded regulatory and fitness-to-practise functions. In addition to the existing 2024/25 staffing complement of 16 FTE, the reformed Council will require additional regulatory posts costing £559,200 per year, alongside recurring annual costs for investigation and appeals panels, High Court appeal processes, legal advice, and training and IT support for panel members. Taken together, these estimates demonstrate that the strengthened regulatory framework will involve significant expenditure to ensure the Council can discharge its enhanced statutory responsibilities.
214. In oral evidence, GTCNI representatives advised the Committee that the current £44 fee, which has remained unchanged since 2007, covers only the existing 15-staff organisation and would not support the wider services envisaged. Their

indicative modelling suggested a future fee of around £75, if inflation is applied at 2.5 per cent or around £55 if inflation is applied at 1.5 per cent, based on an estimated staffing requirement of 22.

215. In its evidence to the Committee, the NITC expressed concern about the proposed fee-setting powers, questioning whether the Council could be genuinely self-funding without placing an undue burden on teachers. It argued that, as Clause 11 widens the scope of the Council's functions and the Department will retain a directing role, there is a risk that fees could escalate, and so should be removed.
216. In written evidence, NASUWT asked the Committee, if not opposing the Bill, to amend Clause 12 to remove GTCNI's ability to set a fee and to replace Article 39 with a provision requiring the Department to fund the Council. UTU and NAHT(NI) also expressed concern about the removal of the Department's approval role, and NAHT(NI) emphasised that any fee-setting mechanism must be transparent, equitable and subject to external scrutiny, either through Departmental oversight or an independent audit process, to prevent disproportionate increases and maintain trust in the system.
217. UTU emphasised that any increase in registration fees must be communicated clearly and well in advance to the teaching workforce, with meaningful engagement and assurance that additional costs are not unfairly passed on to individual teachers. NAHT(NI) recommended that any significant fee increase should be subject to statutory consultation with the profession and supported by an annual financial report that sets out fee income and how it is used to fund GTCNI's work. NAHT(NI) also suggested that consideration should be given to a cap or formula for future fee rises, linked to inflation or other agreed benchmarks, and that supplementary funding options should be explored to reduce reliance on member fees alone.
218. The Department advised that while the intention is for the GTCNI to set its own fees, this would not operate without constraint because the Council would remain subject to the standard ALB control framework.
219. The Department explained that GTCNI would not be a profit-making body and would be accountable to the Department through established mechanisms,

including the requirement to submit business plans, routine financial oversight, six-monthly performance and governance reviews and the need to seek approval before accessing reserves. It stated that any fee would fall within the Department's overall financial controls, preventing disproportionate increases or the accumulation of unnecessary reserves. Officials also noted that six teachers will sit on the new GTC board, giving the profession direct oversight of spending decisions and any proposed fee changes.

220. The Department advised that GTCNI is required to hold a substantial pension liability reserve under the rules of the NILGOSC pension scheme, and that the size of this reserve is dictated by NILGOSC rather than by the Council itself. It noted that GTCNI has had to build up this reserve over many years and is currently unable to add to it on an annual basis, which is why some flexibility in future fee-setting is necessary. The Department advised that the Council would not seek to increase fees beyond what is essential, and that the regulations will include a requirement for engagement and consultation with the profession before any significant change is made.
221. Giving oral evidence on 11 March 2026, the Department acknowledged teaching unions' concern but considered the risk of uncontrolled fee rises to be low. The Department further clarified that the wording allowing income to "exceed the cost" is intended to permit multi-year financial planning so that fees can be smoothed over time, and that the Council must ensure that income and expenditure is balanced.
222. In its commentary on draft subordinate regulations supporting the Bill, the Department advised that the Regulations made under this section will enable GTCNI to set, charge and recover a fee for the functions it carries out, subject to a requirement to consult the profession before any change in the fee level.
223. It set out that regulations will require GTCNI to give teachers and issuing authorities advance notice of the fee payable for the following year and will place duties on teaching employers to provide staff lists so that GTCNI can verify that all registered teachers have paid. The issuing authority will be required to deduct the annual fee from salary on a specified date, transfer the payment to GTCNI and notify the Council of each deduction. The Department

concluded that the Regulations will therefore maintain the current system of annual salary deduction and, through information-sharing between relevant bodies, will ensure that payments are reconciled, double deductions are refunded promptly and any teacher who has not paid their fee is identified so that no one continues to work in a grant-aided school without valid registration.

### **Clause 13 – Rules previously made by the Council**

224. Clause 13 provides that the validity of any rules previously made by GTCNI is not affected by Clauses 2 and 9 and confirms that those rules are to be treated as having been validly made under the 1998 Order for all purposes.

225. UTU indicated that it is content with the proposed changes. NAHT(NI) also supported the provision on the basis that it provides legal certainty and continuity, but recommended clarifying that any retrospective validation should apply only to rules made in good faith and within the intended scope of GTCNI's powers. It further suggested a transparency safeguard requiring GTCNI to publish a consolidated list of all rules currently in force so that stakeholders have clarity on what is valid and applicable. NAHT(NI) also sought assurance that retrospective effect would not override any rights of appeal or challenge for individuals who may have been adversely affected by previous rules.

## **General**

### **Clauses 14-16: Definition, commencement and short title**

- Clause 14 – The 1998 Order
  - This defines “the 1998 Order” for the purposes of the Bill as the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998.
- Clause 15 – Commencement
  - This sets out that all clauses of the Bill will come into operation by Commencement Order, except Clauses 14, 15 and 16, which will come into effect the day after Royal Assent.
- Clause 16 – Short title

- Once this Bill comes into operation, it will be referred to as the General Teaching Council Act (Northern Ireland) 2025.

## Clause-by-clause Scrutiny of the Bill

226. Having considered the written and oral evidence received on the Bill, the Committee deliberated on the clauses at its meetings on 29 April 2026 and 6 May 2026 and undertook its formal clause-by-clause consideration at its meeting on 13 May 2026.
227. One Member, Deputy Chairperson Pat Sheehan MLA, stated that he has tabled an amendment for Consideration Stage in relation to Clause 1 to ensure that half of the Council's membership must comprise elected registered teachers. In setting out his intention, Mr Sheehan referred to correspondence from the NASUWT refuting allegations that teachers were responsible for the dysfunction and chaos associated with the previous Council.
228. The Committee noted the Department's assessment of the impact of a potential Committee amendment to remove the words "require or" from Clauses 2 and 9 of the Bill. In correspondence, the Department advised that removing "require or" would limit its ability to direct GTCNI to make rules on specific matters, with the result that any mandatory requirements would instead need to be set out in more detailed regulations that would be subject to more frequent Committee scrutiny.
229. The Committee's formal clause-by-clause scrutiny of the General Teaching Council Bill is set out below.

### *The Council's constitution and general functions*

#### **Clause 1: Membership**

Deputy Chairperson Mr Sheehan recorded his intention to bring forward an amendment to the clause at Consideration Stage, which has now been tabled.

The Chairperson was content with Clause 1 at this time (without prejudice to developments at Consideration Stage of the Bill).

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 1 as drafted.

## **Clause 2: Rules relating to the Council's constitution**

During informal deliberations, one amendment was proposed to this Clause but this was not brought forward in formal Clause by Clause scrutiny.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 2 as drafted.

## **Clause 3: Sub-committees**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 3 as drafted.

## **Clause 4: Membership of committees and sub-committees**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 4 as drafted.

## **Clause 5: Delegation of functions**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 5 as drafted.

## **Clause 6: Remuneration and allowances**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 6 as Drafted.

### ***Matters relating to the registration of teachers***

## **Clause 7: Provisional registration**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 7 as drafted.

## **Clause 8: Further training**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 8 as drafted.

**Clause 9: Rules relating to registration**

During informal deliberations, one amendment was proposed to this Clause, but this was not brought forward in formal clause-by-clause scrutiny.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 9 as drafted.

**Clause 10: Offences**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 10 as drafted.

**Clause 11: Disciplinary Powers**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 11 as drafted.

***Miscellaneous***

**Clause 12: Fees and charges to cover Council's expenditure**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 12 as drafted.

**Clause 13: Rules previously made by the Council**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 13 as drafted.

***General***

**Clause 14: The 1998 Order**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 14 as drafted.

**Clause 15: Commencement**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 15 as drafted.

**Clause 16: Short Title**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content with the Short Title of the Bill as drafted.

**Long Title**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content with the Long Title of the Bill as drafted.

## **Links to Appendices**

### **Appendix 1: Minutes of Proceedings**

*Minutes of Proceedings – 8 October 2025*

*Minutes of Proceedings – 14 January 2026*

*Minutes of Proceedings – 21 January 2026*

*Minutes of Proceedings – 28 January 2026*

*Minutes of Proceedings – 4 February 2026*

*Minutes of Proceedings – 4 March 2026*

*Minutes of Proceedings – 11 March 2026*

*Minutes of Proceedings – 15 April 2026*

*Minutes of Proceedings – 22 April 2026*

*Minutes of Proceedings – 29 April 2026*

*Minutes of Proceedings – 6 May 2026*

*Minutes of Proceedings – 13 May 2026*

*Minutes of Proceedings – 20 May 2026*

### **Appendix 2: Minutes of Evidence**

*Minutes of Evidence – 8 October 2025*

*Minutes of Evidence – 14 January 2026*

*Minutes of Evidence – 21 January 2026*

*Minutes of Evidence – 28 January 2026*

*Minutes of Evidence – 4 February 2026*

*Minutes of Evidence – 4 March 2026*

*Minutes of Evidence – 11 March 2026*

*Minutes of Evidence – 6 May 2026*

*Minutes of Evidence – 13 May 2026*

*Minutes of Evidence – 20 May 2026*

### **Appendix 3: Written submissions**

*Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland (CPANI)*

*CPANI correspondence (10 March 2026)*

*Controlled Schools' Support Council*

*General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland*

*General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland correspondence (23 April 2026 and 12 May 2026)*

*NAHT Northern Ireland*

*NASUWT*

*Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY)*

*Ulster Teachers' Union*

### **Appendix 4: Memoranda and Papers from the Department for Education**

*Delegated Powers Memorandum*

*Departmental briefing paper (28 January 2026)*

*Departmental correspondence (9 March 2026 and 11 May 2026)*

*DE commentary on draft subordinate regulations*

### **Appendix 5: Other Papers**

*Assembly Legal Services – Convention Rights Memorandum*

*Assembly Research and Information Service – General Teaching Council Bill Paper*

***Assembly Research and Information Service - Teaching regulators in  
Great Britain and Ireland***

**Appendix 6: List of Witnesses that gave evidence to the  
Committee**

***Northern Ireland Teachers' Council***      ***Mr Justin McCamphill, NASUWT***  
***Mr Mark McTaggart, INTO***  
***Mr Stephen McCord, UTU***  
***Ms Joanne Whyte, NAHT***  
***Ms Bronagh Wright, NEU***

***Mr Ian Gallagher, General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland***  
***Ms Mary Jackson, General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland***  
***Ms Julie-Anne Stevenson, General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland***

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