Cyngor Addysgu Cyffredinol Cymru
General Teaching Council for Wales

GTCW Professional Development Funding Programme
April 2009 to March 2010

Guidance for Teachers applying for a Action Research Project

1.0 Introduction

The GTCW Programme makes available a variety of funding streams to enable individual teachers to identify their own professional development needs, within the context of performance management and to organise CPD activities to meet those needs. One such professional development activity which may be undertaken by teachers is the Action Research Project (ARP)

An ARP enables teachers to undertake small-scale, classroom-based, action research which will impact on their own practice as a teacher.

Action research is a term used to describe professionals studying their own practice in order to improve it. When applied to teaching it involves evaluating the impact of one or more interventions which aim to meet the challenges set by an identified problem.

Further guidance on action research may be obtained from the following web-site: www.jeanmcniff.com

2.0 Making an application

To apply for a Teacher Research Scholarship, you should use the appropriate *standard application form* (**Form 2a,** 2009-2010). In completing the form, you will need to refer to the relevant sections of the *CPD Funding Programme Information Booklet 2009-10*, in particular:

- sections 1.2 and 1.3 Who can / cannot apply
- section 1.4 Applications
- section 1.5 Criteria for success
- section 1.6.1 & 1.6.2 Eligible and Non-eligible expenditure
- section 4.0 Action Research Project

In making an application, the application form asks you to provide particular details of the following:

- a rationale for your professional development need, in respect of the knowledge and skills you are trying to gain about your practice or pupils' learning
- details of the action-research project: its design and research methods, with clear timescale
- details of the mentor who will provide support.
- clear details of the expected outcomes or benefits of the activity on your own practice, the school and pupil learning

- clear details of how you will measure the success of the professional development activity
- clear details of how the experiences gained will be shared with others (disseminated).

While the Council would not wish to be prescriptive as to what issue forms the basis of the project, it must be firmly rooted in the teacher's own classroom or current practice. **Projects where the research is restricted to evaluating the impact of resources, LEA initiatives or where the research extends across a whole school or department will not be funded.**

2.1 Timescale

Funding is allocated on a financial year basis with the requirement that the activity is completed, and a claim submitted, no later than 18th March 2010.

Applications must be received by the CPD Team **no later than 1st June 2009**. Applications will not be considered after this date. Funding will be allocated for **activities undertaken during the autumn and spring terms only**.

2.2 Mentor Support

Each participating teacher is required to arrange support from a mentor from an appropriate organisation such as a Higher Education Institute (HEI), subject association, Local Education Authority (LEA), advisory service or research body.

The mentor should have the necessary professional skills and qualifications to assist the teacher to plan the action research, provide support as required during the period and assist in the analysing data and reaching conclusions.

IMPORTANT - Applications <u>must</u> be accompanied by a supporting form from the mentor (Form 2b).

The number of ARPs allocated will be limited to a maximum of <u>two</u> per 'host' organisation.

2.3 Identifying your professional development needs (application form - questions 13)

In completing this section of the application form, the main emphasis should be upon defining the specific knowledge and skills you are trying to gain and in doing so, what area of your own work you are aiming to improve. In addition, you will need to consider how the activity might link to the needs of the school, an LEA or national priority.

You will already have discussed and designed the action-research project with your mentor to provide a clear understanding of the issue you have identified in your practice or classroom, the rationale for the research methods chosen, indications of the data that will be gathered and how it will be analysed, what future actions this may trigger and a clear timescale for each of the project elements.

2.4 Expected benefits or outcomes (application form - question 14)

All professional development activities should be undertaken with anticipated outcomes or benefits in mind, and ones which can be recognised or measured. It is important that you evaluate the potential benefits or outcomes of your planned activity from the outset. These

benefits or outcomes may be in one or more of the following areas: your own development as a teacher, benefits to your school or benefits to your pupils' learning.

2.5 Dissemination/sharing (application form – question 15)

Professional development provides the opportunity for you to share the learning experience with others, including for example to:

- train others
- cascade skills and experiences to teachers of the same Key Stage or department
- raise the awareness of other staff.

This sharing of information might be within your school, LEA or national level.

The Council is actively encouraging headteachers to ensure that teachers who undertake GTCW professional development activities spread the good practice learned with their colleagues. Indeed, some schools/departments have established CPD dissemination as a standing agenda item for twilight sessions or INSET days. In this way, knowledge is shared and not lost.

The Council would also highlight that in previous years, teachers who have presented the outcomes of their projects to fellow teachers, whether locally or nationally have found this to be particularly valuable as a developmental opportunity in its own right, enabling the teacher to consolidate new knowledge or practice by sharing / disseminating it to others.

2.6 Research Methods (application form – question 16)

Please clarify the research methods being adopted, including key project milestones and timescales

2.7 Linking your application to specific objectives/priorities (application form – question 17)

Please tick as relevant.

2.8 Support for your application

In submitting your application for GTCW funding, you must secure the support of your headteacher, who should sign the declaration *"I have read the application and support the above named teacher's application in accordance with the conditions outlined by the GTCW"*. (**Headteacher applicants** are required to get the support of the Chair of Governors).

In separate guidance for headteachers, the Council states that headteachers / the Chair of Governors should not support a teacher's application if he / she is not satisfied that the considerations set out above have been adequately addressed. Also, the Council recognises that in some schools, large numbers of teachers may wish to apply for funding. Teachers will therefore need to appreciate that headteachers have the responsibility for managing their schools and pupils' learning experiences and it may not be possible for all applications to be supported by the headteacher in the same year.

2.9 Unsuccessful applications

Teachers are advised that in 2005-08, one in ten applications were returned to teachers as they did not meet the funding criteria in the Council's Information Booklet. Examples of reasons for this include:

- the criteria set out above had not been adequately addressed
- some questions had not been completed
- the mentor form (Form 2b) had not been attached
- the mentor did not possess the necessary skills or experience
- the application had not been signed by the teacher and / or the headteacher
- the financial breakdown was incomplete or incorrect
- the professional development activity had already been started or completed
- the activity was not eligible,
- the timescale of the action-research fell entirely or partly outside the particular financial year
- a teacher had already received one grant in the current financial year
- the applicant was not eligible to apply
- the project was not designed as action-research
- the project was not robust enough to be considered good value for money
- the issue has already been investigated in depth, and the findings are readily available to teachers through publications.

3.0 Further information

The Professional Development Team, The General Teaching Council for Wales, 4th Floor, Southgate House, Wood Street, Cardiff, CF10 1EW. Telephone: 029 2055 0350,
Fax: 029 2055 0655, E-mail: cpd@gtcw.org.uk.

The Council's CPD Wales website (www.gtcw.org.uk) holds a range of information to assist teachers and others with an interest in the GTCW Professional Development Funding Programme, including guidance material and details of previous projects.