



Cyngor Addysgu Cyffredinol Cymru
General Teaching Council for Wales

GTCW Professional Development Funding Programme April 2009 to March 2010

Guidance to Action Research Project Mentors

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). This enables a teacher to undertake a small-scale, classroom-based action research project which will impact on their own practice as a teacher.

Each participating teacher is required to arrange the support of a mentor from an appropriate organisation such as a Higher Education Institution, Subject Association, Local Education Authority, Advisory service or Research body.

This guidance note is intended to provide clarification on the role and responsibilities of the mentor in supporting a teacher.

Please refer to the CPD Information Booklet 2009-2010 for full guidance.

2.0 The role of the mentor

The Council views the core role of the mentor as being to assist a teacher in:

- designing and planning the action-research project, ensuring that the action-research is embedded in the teacher's classroom and practice
- developing the teacher's knowledge and skills in (a) evaluating their own practice (b) research methods (c) gathering, comparing and interpreting appropriate data in order to measure the benefits or outcomes of their action research (d) report writing (e) sharing / disseminating a teacher's experiences with others
- providing ongoing guidance and support throughout the project;

The mentor should have the necessary professional skills and qualifications to assist the teacher in these areas. The extent of the support required from the mentor will be at the teacher's discretion and will vary from individual to individual. However a teacher should not work in isolation from the mentor.

IMPORTANT - The number of ARPs allocated will be limited to a maximum of two per 'host' organisation.

3.0 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**.

4.0 Supporting applications

In submitting an application for GTCW funding, the teacher applicant must submit an additional form setting out the support to be provided by a mentor, who should sign the declaration *"I declare that I will provide the support outlined if the teacher's application for a Teacher Research Scholarship is successful, in accordance with the Terms and Conditions outlined by the GTCW"*.

The ARP Mentor form (**Form 2b**) requires the mentor to specify the following details:

- the support you will give to the teacher
- the research methods to be employed by the teacher
- the frequency and dates of meetings with the teacher
- how you will monitor, quality assure and evaluate the research
- the guidance you will offer in helping the teacher to measure improvements in his / her teaching, the school's development and pupils' learning
- the guidance you will offer in helping the teacher to share (disseminate) the knowledge and skills gained from the project with others.

With these matters in mind, key considerations for the mentor in signing this declaration are set out below. If you are not satisfied that the matters below have been adequately addressed, you should not agree to provide mentor support.

Mentors are advised that the Council will only fund activities it has agreed **in writing** in advance of the commencement of the activity.

Mentors 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.

4.1 Identifying and designing the action research project

Mentors are advised that a teacher's desire to undertake a particular action research project should usually result from:

- the annual Performance Management review in his/her school
- discussions between the teacher and his/her line manager.

The main emphasis should be upon defining the specific knowledge and skills a teacher is trying to gain and in doing so, what area of his / her own work a teacher is aiming to improve. In addition, a teacher will need to consider how the activity might link to the needs of the school, an LEA or national objective/priority.

The focus should be clearly embedded in the teacher's own classroom and with his/her own pupils. Other types of educational research such as research on subject content, examining whole school concerns or as part of LEA initiatives are not eligible under this category.

Where teachers are undertaking action-research in their classroom as part of a Master's qualification, the project must comply with the Council's definition of action-research and timescale in order to receive funding.

The maximum allocation for Mentor support will be no more than 25% of the total grant (i.e. £375)

Most teachers will require guidance on the design of their project, and the Council recognises that the initial meeting to agree this will usually take place before the application is submitted and the funding confirmed.

4.2 Expected outcomes

At the teacher level, professional development activities should be undertaken with an anticipated set of outcomes or benefits in mind, which can be demonstrated or measured, and are planned at the beginning of the CPD project.

4.3 Dissemination/sharing

The Council considers that presenting the conclusions from an action research project is an important element of any research. Such projects offer a particular teacher an opportunity to share the learning experience with others, including for example to:

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

This sharing of information might be at a school, LEA or national level. Indeed, headteachers are actively encouraged to ensure that teachers who undertake GTCW professional development activities spread the good practice learned with their colleagues.

In providing support to teachers, mentors should give specific advice on how to present findings from their research and if possible provide opportunities to share findings with other researchers through meetings, conferences or academic journals if appropriate.

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.

4.4 Competing priorities

The Council recognises that most mentors will have other priorities. However, once an application is supported, a mentor has a commitment to ensure that teacher receives the support specified in the application forms in line with the specified timescale. The Council has seen occasions where accepted research projects have not been completed within the dates agreed or not completed at all.

IMPORTANT - The number of ARPs allocated will be limited to a maximum of two per 'host' organisation.

5.0 Following the activity

Following the completion of an activity, a teacher will be required to submit the following:

- a financial claim, including accompanying invoices;
- a completed supply cover form (where appropriate);
- a 3,000 word report.

With these points in mind, key considerations for the mentor are as follows.

5.1 Financial claims and supply cover details

In submitting a financial claim, the teacher will require copies of any invoices and receipts. Mentors are advised that claims cannot be accepted by the Council without such invoices and receipts and all incomplete claims will be returned, unpaid.

Mentors are asked to assist teachers by providing them with invoices for any fees promptly. All invoices should be made out to either the teacher or the school. The Council will not accept liability as a debtor for expenditure incurred under the CPD Funding Programme.

5.2 Report

One particular area where the Council would expect a mentor to provide assistance and expertise to a teacher is in preparing the written report (3,000 words) following the action research activity. Mentors are advised that teachers are directed to include the following details in the report:

- an executive summary
- the activity undertaken / issue being addressed, including the rationale for the professional development need
- the research methodology
- an analysis of the outcomes or benefits gained from the research in terms of improved practice and improvements in pupil learning
- how the experiences and new skills gained have been / will be shared with others (disseminated)
- personal reflection by the teacher on the effectiveness of the activity
- conclusions and future plans.

Occasions have occurred previously where the applicant has submitted a copy of their report without the Mentor's knowledge. In some cases the report has been returned to the applicant for further development as it did not reflect the financial and time investment provided. The Council reserves the right not to reimburse any costs unless it is satisfied with the quality of the report.

Therefore, all ARP reports must be signed by the Mentor prior to submission to the CPD Team.

Further details on report writing are available in the separate guidance sheet for teachers. This is available from the Council's CPD Wales website (www.gtcw.org.uk) or from the Council's Professional Development team.

6.0 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.