



Cyngor Addysgu Cyffredinol Cymru
General Teaching Council for Wales

GTCW Professional Development Funding Programme April 2009 to March 2010

Guidance to Sabbatical 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 Teacher Sabbatical. This enables a teacher to spend a significant period (4-6 weeks as one block of time) in a different environment such as in business, the public or voluntary sector. This activity will enable the teacher concerned to acquire new knowledge or skills to benefit their practice as a teacher or role in the school. In turn, the teacher is likely to contribute his / her own expertise to the placement organisation.

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

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

2.0 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**.

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

3.0 The role of the mentor

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

- designing and planning the sabbatical placement, while ensuring that the aims and objectives for the placement will impact on a teacher's classroom practice
- helping to develop the teacher's knowledge and skills as set out in his / her application to the Council
- their commitment to the Council in (a) evaluating the benefits and outcomes from the sabbatical (b) sharing / disseminating their experiences with others (c) preparing a written report following completion of the sabbatical
- providing ongoing guidance and support throughout the period of the sabbatical.

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 vary, however a teacher should not work in isolation from the mentor.

4.0 Supporting applications

In submitting an application for GTCW funding, the teacher applicant must attach a supporting letter (signed) confirming the placement and outlining the supervision to be provided by the mentor.

The letter you write should specify the following:

- brief details of the nature and aims of the organisation
- negotiated objectives, which benefit the teacher and organisation
- timetable, including weekly outlines
- the support you will give to the teacher, the frequency and dates of meetings
- how you will monitor, quality assure and evaluate the placement
- 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 supporting the sabbatical are set out below. If you are not satisfied that the matters below have been adequately addressed, you should not agree to support the sabbatical.

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 Sabbatical

Mentors are advised that a teacher's desire to undertake a sabbatical should 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 priority.

An initial meeting to agree the design / plan will need to take place before the application is submitted and the funding confirmed.

Sabbaticals should be taken as one block of time with a minimum of four weeks and a maximum of six weeks. The Sabbatical should aim to give a teacher experience of the work undertaken within the host organisation. This should extend beyond shadowing. Most Sabbaticals provide reciprocal benefits for both the teacher and the placement organisation. For this reason, placement fees will not be funded.

4.2 Expected outcomes

All professional development activities should be undertaken with an anticipated set of outcomes or benefits in mind, and ones which can be demonstrated or measured. It is important that the evaluation of the activity is planned at the beginning of the CPD project.

4.3 Dissemination/sharing

The Council considers that a sabbatical offers the teacher concerned an opportunity 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 staff.

This sharing of information might be at a school, LEA or national level.

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.

In providing support to teachers, mentors may be able to give specific advice on how to present findings from their placement and if possible provide opportunities to share findings with 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 sabbatical placements have not been completed within the dates agreed or not completed at all.

IMPORTANT - The number of Sabbaticals 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
- a 2,000 word report.

5.1 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 (2,000 words) following the sabbatical. Mentors are advised that teachers are directed to include the following details in the report:

- a rationale for undertaking the sabbatical
- an analysis of the outcomes or benefits gained from the placement, in terms of gained skills/knowledge for the teacher, anticipated benefits to 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 Sabbatical 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 20550350, Fax: 029 20550655, 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.