

PE2170/D: Abolish the General Teaching Council for Scotland

Petitioner written submission, 9 February 2026

Thank you for inviting further comment following the Scottish Government's written submission of 6 November 2025.

The petitioner's position is that it would be unsafe and unwise for the Committee to close this petition without further clarification from the Scottish Government. The latest response does not address the concerns raised by the Committee, nor does it engage with the substantive evidence previously submitted.

1. The Government has not answered the Committee's questions about GTCS effectiveness

The Government continues to assert that the GTCS is "effective" but provides no evidence to support this claim. It does not address:

- the PSA's criticism of the GTCS
- the widely reported delays in Fitness to Teach cases
- public safeguarding concerns raised by the public, media and MSPs
- the impact of this on pupils, teachers, and public confidence

The Committee specifically expressed concern about the PSA report. The Government's response does not engage with a single one of the PSA's criticisms. Without evidence, the assertion of effectiveness cannot be accepted.

2. The Government has not addressed the concerns about civil servant–GTCS correspondence

The Government states that it is "reasonable" for officials to refer to GTCS when considering petitions. This does not address the issue raised.

The concern is not that officials sought factual information. The concern is that a senior civil servant initiated an informal discussion with the GTCS leadership within hours of the petition's publication, using the subject line "Petition" and stating "we have a template to fill in".

This creates a reasonable perception of coordination between Government and regulator on a petition concerning the regulator's own future. The Government's explanation does not address this perception or the implications for independence, transparency, and fairness.

3. The Government has changed its position on "not practical or achievable"

The Government now states that this phrase reflects a "policy judgement", not a legal or procedural barrier. This is a material shift from its earlier position, which implied that abolition could not be done.

The Government now accepts that abolition is legally and procedurally possible. This clarification is welcome, but it highlights the need for the Committee to understand the basis of the Government's policy position, particularly in light of the PSA findings and the concerns raised by the Committee.

4. The Government has not addressed the wider evidence of systemic failure

The Government's response does not address:

- the decline in national educational outcomes
- the barriers to whistleblowing created by the EIS stance
- the GTCS's refusal to act on its own survey data on teacher bullying
- the revolving-door governance culture across Scottish education bodies

These issues go to the heart of whether the current regulatory model is functioning in the public interest. The Government's silence on these matters is concerning.

Conclusion

The Scottish Government's latest submission does not provide the clarity or reassurance required to close this petition. Key questions raised by the Committee remain unanswered, and the concerns highlighted by the PSA and by the petitioner have not been addressed.

Given the seriousness of the issues involved—public protection, regulatory independence, and the integrity of Scotland's education system the petitioner respectfully asks the Committee to seek further clarification from the Scottish Government before considering its next step.