



TransformED - Post-Primary School Leaders' Curriculum Conference - 29 September 2025

Post-Primary school leaders from across Northern Ireland attended the TransformED Curriculum Conference held in La Mon Hotel in Belfast on Monday 29 September.

There were keynote speeches from Minister for Education Paul Givan MLA who spoke about the impact of TransformED on the Northern Ireland Curriculum and his ambitious plans for reform, Dr Michael Fordham on the challenges and opportunities that curriculum reform brings and Lucy Crehan on the curricular characteristics of high performing education systems.

There were also opportunities to attend a variety of curriculum inspired seminars and the day concluded with a panel discussion with Christine Counsell OBE, Lucy Crehan, Alistair Hamill, Michael Fordham, Rachel Foster and Davis Didau.

DE launches consultation on changes to CCEA Qualifications

Qualifications in Northern Ireland have not been reviewed since 2016. In light of the TransformED Strategy, it would seem an apposite time to examine their continued relevance. The following outlines the proposed reforms. If you would like to contribute to the GBA response, please get in touch (joe@gbani.org)

Proposed Reforms

GCSEs

- Retain as main Key Stage 4 qualification.
- Reduce content and limit assessments to two per subject.
- Remove controlled assessments from English Language.
- Align grading with England's 9–1 scale.
- Shift to linear structure (except English and Maths).

A Levels

- Retain as main post-16 qualification.
- Remove AS levels; adopt two-year linear structure.
- Reduce content and limit assessments.
- Introduce new A level in Gaeilge for Irish-medium students.

New Qualification Proposal

- Northern Ireland Diploma for Education (NIDE) at Key

Stage 4:

- Level 2 Literacy and Numeracy.
- Careers, Employability and Personal Development programme.
- Level 2 qualifications in STEM and Humanities/Arts subjects.

Details on how to contribute to shaping the future of our qualifications framework through the public consultation are included in the 'Consultations' section below.

School Uniforms (Guidance and Allowances) Bill Update

This Bill was moved to the Consideration Stage on Monday 15 September 2025 by the Minister of Education. This was followed by a lengthy debate in the Assembly where the Marshalled List of amendments were discussed by members of all parties in the Chamber. A number of amendments and clauses were agreed following division and the Bill stood referred to the Speaker, but there was disappointment that some of the amendments agreed by the Education Committee at the scrutiny stage were not listed by the Speaker.

There was discussion and debate in the Chamber on a range of issues including the frequency of the revision of the guidelines, capping the cost of uniforms and directions to schools that fail to adhere to guidelines in one or more material aspects.

Further amendments were discussed on Monday 29 September (the list of Marshalled Amendments can be viewed at [ML2](#)). Amendments 1, 5 and 7-12 deal with monitoring and enforcing of guidelines and Amendments 2, 3, 4 & 6 relate to the content of the guidelines. Amendment 8 fell after the House divided. The bill stands referred to the Speaker.

This legislation leading to schools having to follow DE Guidance on a number of areas including uniform affordability will have its Final Stage in the Assembly next month with the aim of being in place for the 2026/2027 academic year. In the absence of published guidelines to date, the precise outworking of the Bill remains difficult to determine.

Making the Case for German in Northern Ireland

GBA attended the Goethe Institut's inaugural 'making the case for German' event in Belfast.

These are just a few events and deadlines that are coming up in the next week(s) that may be interesting to you or your students:

- Gimagine Award – a free license for teachers to have a look around the platform – just sign up here: [GIMAGINE AWARD: View Campaign | GIMAGINE AWARD](#)
- AI in the Languages Classroom Teacher Exchange – Apply now: [Artificial Intelligence in the languages classroom - Goethe-Institut United Kingdom](#)
- Online Career Roadshow – free to attend with your students, 29th September 2026: [Career Roadshow - Online Edition - Goethe-Institut United Kingdom](#)

Live Consultations

Temporary	Variation	Policy	Review
The Department is consulting on Temporary Variation (TV) Policy. The closing date for replies is Monday 3 November at 23:59 - Temporary Variation (TV) Policy Review - NI Direct - Citizen Space .			

The	Future	of	CCEA	Qualifications
The Department is seeking views on proposals on the future of CCEA GCSEs, AS levels and A Levels. The consultation will close on Thursday 13 November at 23:59 - further information and details on how to respond can be found Consultation on The Future of CCEA Qualifications Department of Education				

UK Supreme Court Education Programmes

The Supreme Court of the United Kingdom & Judicial Committee of the Privy Council have been in touch with GBA to highlight the education programmes offered by the UK Supreme Court.

The 'Ask a Justice' and 'Debate Day' programme can both take place virtually whilst the 'Debate Day' programme can also take place in person in London. During the Debate Day series, schools have the opportunity to debate a legal topic at the Supreme Court. Successful applicants have a tour of the building learning about the court's role and its history before then splitting into their three teams (For, Against and Judges). The students are coached by professional lawyers who help them develop skills in argument, reasoning, and public speaking. The debates take place in one of the UKSC courtrooms where students will debate key legal issues drawn from an actual Supreme Court case. After the debate, there is a Q&A session, where students can ask questions about careers in law.

Teachers and students will be provided with the resource packs in advance to help prepare for the debate. This will ensure every student can fully engage with the debate especially since they will have prepared their key submissions before the day. The subject of the debate will be associated with a previous UKSC case, for example: "Do stop and search powers strike a fair balance between the rights of the individual and the interests of society?" There is the option for a virtual session whereby students will instead be coached and make their presentations through Microsoft Teams.

If you are interested in applying, please do look on our website: [Debate days - UK Supreme Court](#) Applications close on the **Friday 3rd October**.

Governance Matters!

Thursday 16 October 2025, Silverbirch Hotel, Omagh

This event offers governors the opportunity to connect with peers, engage with Education Authority staff, and access training in one place. This event is open to all governors across all sectors.

Governors who wish to attend the Omagh Seminar are required to register using the link below.

Register [here](#)

Governance Survey 2025.

The report has been shared with our member schools and GBA will use the

findings based on the 135 responses to inform future training events for governors and engagement with DE and other stakeholders in the year ahead.

Advertising of Teaching and Support roles on the GBA Website

The GBA provides a free advertising service for our member schools. Job vacancies are posted on our website and Twitter page. The Education Authority website also links to the GBA jobs section.

****PLEASE NOTE THAT OUR JOB TEMPLATE HAS BEEN UPDATED AND IS AVAILABLE TO DOWNLOAD [HERE](#)****

If you would like us to host a vacancy for your school, **please contact us, with the completed job template for each post, and allow at least TWO WORKING DAYS for posts to be uploaded.**