



The Moray House School of Education
The University of Edinburgh

Review of Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice

The Panel met from 9.30am to 1pm on 11 May 2016 in the Cromwell Room, Old Moray House.

Panel Members

Dr Claire Valentin, Moray House School of Education, Convener
Dr Christine Nash, Moray House School of Education
Dr Elaine Haycock-Stuart, College of Humanities and Social Science
Dr Catherine Bovill, Academic Development Unit, University of Glasgow

Programme Team

Dr Hazel Christie
Dr Neil Lent
Dr Andrea English
Dr Miesbeth Knottenbelt
Ms Emily Salvesen

In attendance

Mrs Dee Scott

Apologies

Dr Alan MacPherson

The Convenor opened the meeting by welcoming all participants and by thanking them for their help, especially the external panel member who had travelled to Edinburgh for this meeting.

Documentation in support of the proposal had been circulated to the Panel prior to the meeting. The panel agreed that the supporting material prepared by Dr Hazel Christie was well presented, although drafts of the revised course descriptors would have been useful. Following this summary and some discussion, the Panel agreed on the key issues to raise with the programme team. The programme team then joined the group for the second part of the meeting. The subsequent discussions included aspects such as:

- Staff resources
- Assessment strategy

- Higher Education Academy (HEA) re-accreditation
- Amalgamation of courses
- Non-completion rates
- Grading system

Following the above discussions, the Panel had a further private meeting to agree on the following recommendations and conditions, which were then presented to the programme team:

Commendations

The PGCAP team would like to thank the Panel for their constructive comments and questions on the day of the review. We are also grateful for their commendations, conditions and recommendations. These have proved to be very helpful and we have given them a lot of thought as we firm up our proposals for the redesign of the programme. We include our considered responses to each of the conditions and recommendations below in blue, point by point.

Commendation 1
The Programme Team demonstrated a positive approach to the review and their ways of thinking about the programme were excellent. The team were very open to suggestions.
Commendation 2
The integrated approach to the programme and the use of staff from all areas of the University was excellent
Commendation 3
The current orientation approach was commended as performing a useful function for new staff.
Commendation 4
The Programme Team was cohesive and committed to enhancing Learning and Teaching within the University
Commendation 5
A good range of courses were available in the current programme and could be drawn upon for the revised programme

Recommendations

Recommendation 1
Review status of students auditing the programme – generally only ETA students should be permitted to audit.

We have considered this and agree that auditing should be restricted to EdTA students in the new iteration of the Programme.

Recommendation 2

Students should be matriculated from the outset. There would be an option to opt-out, rather than to opt-in.

All students will be matriculated from the outset when we introduce the new Programme.

Recommendation 3

Explore how the contribution of staff from the wider university to the programme could be recognised more explicitly.

We are considering this at our next team meeting in December.

Recommendation 4

There should be liaison with Directors of Learning and Teaching to inform them about the review and development of the programme

We have raised this with Susan Rhind, Chair of the network for Directors of Learning and Teaching, and we will be leading a discussion of our review work on the PGCAP at the network in Semester 2. The Network will also provide opportunities for regular updates on developments with the PGCAP to Directors of Learning and Teaching within the wider learning and teaching CPD context.

Recommendation 5

Explore the possibility of different levels of HEA accreditation for the PGCAP. Explore the option of an exit point at Associate Fellowship (AFHEA) level.

After in-depth consideration by the PGCAP team it was decided not to go down this route. There is a clearly defined route to Associate Fellowship via the Introduction to Academic Practice programme. We also felt that we would like to encourage students to complete the full PGCAP programme rather than opting out after 40 credits.

Recommendation 6

It may be necessary to have 2 x 20 credit core courses, with 2 x 10 or 1 x 20 option courses

The team has thought long and hard about this, together with benchmarking against other PGCAP programmes in the UK, and have decided on 1 x 40 credit compulsory course, Foundations of Academic Practice, and 2 x 10 credit options. We have attached below our proposal for the new Foundations course (Appendix One)

The remaining options would be drawn from a completely new suite of courses including:

Leadership in Higher Education
Working with Postgraduate Students
Supporting Students
Getting Creative with Large Groups
Digital Education
Researching your Teaching

Recommendation 7

IAD to explore the possibility of maintaining a University wide orientation, and ensure PGCAP marketing and recruitment are highlighted in this orientation

We are working on this. The Orientation to the PGCAP will be replaced by a series of induction events within Schools for staff new to teaching or new to teaching at the University. The Foundations course of the new PGCAP will serve some of the same functions as the existing Orientation in terms of providing students with the opportunity to network extensively with their peers and gain understanding and knowledge of how the University works.

Recommendation 8

Mapping more explicitly any new Learning Outcomes for courses and the programme on to the United Kingdom Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF)

We have used the UKPSF in devising the Learning Outcomes for the compulsory Foundations course, and are currently using them in drawing up the paperwork for the new suite of option courses. The range of material that must be covered for the UKPSF is one of the reasons for making the Foundations course 40 credits.

Recommendation 9

Look to reduce assessment load, but increase choice of assessment to some extent. The revised programme should include a variety of assessment modes.

We have decided that the Foundations course will be assessed by a series of blog post thus spreading the workload over the lifecycle of the course. We will also be introducing a range of different assessment formats for use in this, including the use of multi-media posts as well as more conventional academic posts. A range of assessment methods will be used for the new courses, and we will be considering the balance of these at individual course and programme level at our next team meeting in December. An important consideration is that assessment modes need to be congruent with intended learning outcomes so variety for its own sake is not desirable.

Recommendation 10

Consider how the programme could be made available for University of Edinburgh staff teaching overseas

At present we do not have the capacity to offer online equivalents. The best we can currently offer is an interruption of studies and the recommendation that the knowledge acquired from teaching overseas is used for assessment purposes.

Recommendation 11

Review the timeline for completion of the programme to ensure that participants are not overloaded by the expected notional hours required.

We have done this to ensure that students take now a maximum of 20 credits in one semester.

Conditions

Condition 1

Review University Postgraduate Assessment Regulations in relation to the new programme

to comply with Pass/Fail regulation, or seek exemption if necessary to permit resubmission of failed assessments.

We raised this with our Regulations Expert and our practices are now fully compliant with the Regulations.

Condition 2

Provide clear rationale for Pass/Not yet passed provision and Pass/Fail for final assessment. Make a clear distinction between formative and summative assessment stages.

This will be included in the paperwork for the relevant committees in MHSE when we put the new Programme through the approval process.

Condition 3

Ensure that the core content the HEA will expect in a PGCAP is covered in the core courses within the new PGCAP.

We think we have achieved this will be outlined content of the Foundations course, and the suite of new option courses.

Condition 4

Whatever redesign is made, this must meet the criteria for HEA accreditation

The paperwork will be going to the HEA for approval in Semester 2.

Before ending the meeting, the Convener thanked all the participants for their hard work, and the programme team also thanked the Panel for the valuable discussions, recommendations and conditions.

Appendix One: New Course Proposal: Foundations of Academic Practice

September 2016

Credit rating: 40 credits, SCQF Level 11

Course leader: Dr Hazel Christie

Rationale and overview

The proposed 'Foundations of Academic Practice' (FAP) will be the new compulsory course on the Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PGCAP). It replaces the existing compulsory course, Developing my Approach to Teaching. FAP will provide an opportunity for colleagues from across the University to develop a critical understanding of core aspects of their academic practice including teaching, assessment and feedback, management, research and external engagement.

There are three rationales for the course. First, the course will meet the need for professional development of colleagues as accredited by the Higher Education Academy, and as set out in the UK Professional Standards Framework. The emphasis of this Framework, and of this proposed course, is on supporting colleagues to enhance their scholarly understanding of learning and teaching. The proposed course is designed to build on our colleagues' own practice and to encourage them to reflect on this in a critical manner with a view to improving on it.

Secondly, the course will enable colleagues to contribute to designing and delivering the high quality learning environments and learning experiences set out in the University's vision for learning and teaching. Extract from new Vision, due Sept 2016.

The remit of this course is to prepare colleagues to deliver this vision through critically reflecting on, and developing, their own academic practice within the University.

Thirdly, it provides the opportunity to support colleagues in the development of their research careers, and in this way to make an active contribution to the research strategies of their Schools.

This course will provide our colleagues with an opportunity to engage with, and critically examine, different pedagogies and practices with a view to enhancing their academic practice. Furthermore, participants are encouraged to experiment and discuss with peers in order to widen their understanding and share practice between different disciplines and Schools, as well as to build on the wealth of expertise they bring with them.

Summary course description

FAP will begin from the premise that we should start from, and build on, colleagues' own academic practice. Indeed, the External Examiner has given us a very strong steer in this direction. By drawing on the scholarly literature, including both qualitative and quantitative research, reflective accounts of practice and other diverse forms of enquiry, it will provide colleagues with some foundations that could be used as the basis for their further development of, and learning about, their academic practice. The course will address theory and practice in promoting active learning and student engagement in higher education, with a view to enabling our participants to work constructively with diverse groups of students and with varying capabilities. It will look at the importance of learning journeys and student diversity in designing and teaching in range of learning environments, as well as at questions about learning design and delivery, including the use of technology. It will also look at the development of a research portfolio and an important theme is to support participants with

career planning and to give them the tools they need to develop their academic practice, including both leadership and pedagogic practice, over a number of years.

Learning outcomes

On completion of the course:

- You will be able to demonstrate a critical understanding of the key concepts and theories relating to core areas of academic practice in higher education.
- You will be able to apply concepts and theories from relevant research to enhance your own academic practice in ways appropriate to your discipline and working context.
- You will be able to critically evaluate the practical constraints and affordances in your work settings and identify practical solutions to problems you identify
- You will be able to take account of student diversity through ensuring that your academic practice is inclusive of varying student perspectives and needs.
- Your practice will be informed by critical reflection on your work and your own development as an academic practitioner. You will be able to work with others to bring about change and development.

Proposed course delivery

This 40 credit course will be offered over two semesters. The traditional arrangement for courses on this Programme is that colleagues are asked to spend one full day working in a classroom setting, or on line equivalent, for each 10 credits they gain. Given that this course is weighted at 40 credits it would have the equivalent of four full teaching days. Of these, three days will be delivered face-to-face and one will be delivered fully on-line so that colleagues all gain experience of this mode of delivery.

The course will be organised into four blocks. Each block will allow colleagues to engage with a key theme in academic practice.

1. **Academic roles, identities and practice.** Including: introduction to University strategies and policies; wider context of HE policy including UKPSF and Vitae RDF; relationship between teaching, research and external engagement; importance of scholarly reflection on academic practice; ways of thinking and practising within and beyond disciplines; academic identities. Personal priorities and vision for their own academic practice.
2. **Promoting active and engaged student learning.** Including: theories of how students learn; active learning and student engagement; using technology to promote engaged learning including the flipped classroom; working with diversity; fostering learning through assessment.
3. **Designing high quality learning environments.** Including designing courses, course organisation and management; designing learning environments to support diverse learners; constructive alignment between learning outcomes, learning

activities and assessments. Giving high quality feedback. Using technology to create high quality learning environments. Inclusive learning environments.

4. **Putting your learning into practice.** Becoming agents of change in the University. Using the understanding gained in the course to plan for furthering academic practice. Opportunity to develop practice including peer observation of teaching and development of different teaching strategies. Sharing new knowledge and practices with colleagues in Schools and disciplines. Personal action planning using the UKPSF and Vitae RDF.

Each block will be taught in an interactive way with practical workshops and activities designed to enhance learning and reflection. Colleagues will be encouraged to prepare for the sessions ahead of time in order to maximise the learning potential of the contact time. Each block will have a named co-ordinator and input will be drawn from experts from across the University. The third block, Designing high quality learning environments, will be taught fully online so that participants gain experience of teaching and learning in the digital university.

A focus throughout the course will be on the affordances of face-to-face, blended and online teaching for creating accessible and inclusive learning environments. The course has been carefully designed using a range of different activities and exercises which support the diversity of learning preferences amongst colleagues.

Indicative study activities and notional time commitment

For a 40 credit course with 400 student effort hours we would expect the following:

Study activity	Time commitment
Class Hours	40
Preparing for class	20
Feedback/feed forward	20
Directed Learning, Independent Learning	320
Total hours	400

Assessment

Summative

Participants are required to draw on their own experience and disciplinary context, as well as the knowledge and understanding gained from engaging with the course and literature.

Participants are asked to submit an 8,000 word blog (or multi-media equivalent) based on their developing academic practice. Each blog post will address a substantive aspect of their developing academic practice. These might include for example: a critique of a relevant article; re-purposing a pedagogic approach for their discipline; a report on learning from Peer Observation of Teaching; analysis of course evaluation reports from Evasys; the opportunity to create an open educational resource; a personal vision and action plan. Detailed guidance and support will be provided, and colleagues will be encouraged to use multi-modal methods where appropriate. This assessment strategy will enable colleagues to

demonstrate achievement in a number of ways thus promoting inclusion of different learning preferences. Peers will be encouraged to give feedback to one another on the blog posts, and to repurpose the material on the basis of the comments received. This will allow colleagues to explore the risks and challenges around assessment and feedback, as well as ensuring that the course models a range of assessment strategies.

Assessment thus plays a double role in this course. First, it needs to be credible for colleagues and to show how it enables them to meet the learning outcomes for the course. Secondly, it is important that colleagues gain an understanding and appreciation of the kinds of assessment tools that the University would like them to show leadership on. We believe that blog meets both of these criteria.

Formative

Participants will receive feedback from tutors and peers in each of the four blocks. Two posts from the blog portfolio will be used as the basis for formative feedback. Both tutors and peers will be involved in providing this feedback.

Indicative reading

Baran, E., Correia, A. and Thompson, A. (2011) Transforming online teaching practice: critical analysis of the literature on the roles and competences of online teachers. *Distance Education*, 32(3), pp.421-439.

<http://www.tandfonline.com.ezproxy.is.ed.ac.uk/doi/pdf/10.1080/01587919.2011.610293>

Carless, D. (2007) Learning-oriented assessment: conceptual bases and practical implications. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, 44(1), pp.57-66.

<http://www.tandfonline.com.ezproxy.is.ed.ac.uk/doi/pdf/10.1080/14703290601081332>

Lea, J. (2015 ed) *Enhancing Learning and Teaching in Higher Education: engaging with the dimensions of practice* (Open University Press)

Pokorny, H. and Warren, D. (2016 ed) *Enhancing Teaching Practice in Higher Education* (Sage)

Weller, S. (2015) *Academic Practice: developing as a professional in higher education* (Sage)