

Qualifications, professional development and probation



Initial training and further education teaching qualifications

Since September 2007 all newly appointed FE lecturers, whether full- or part-time, have to gain a formal FE teaching qualification. For a lecturer this is a Diploma in Teaching in Lifelong Learning (DTLLS). There is also a Certificate in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (CTLTS). This is a level 3 or 4 qualification. It is for staff who are not undertaking the full range of tasks and roles expected of a teacher/lecturer. All full- and part-time FE lecturers also have to undertake a 30-hour induction course, Preparing to Teach in Lifelong Learning (PTLLS). For those taking DTLLS or the CTLTS this preparatory course will be part of their diploma or certificate.

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- Most FE lecturers take their FE teaching qualification as an in-service programme once they obtain a further education teaching post.
- Lecturers who are teaching Skills for Life programmes Literacy, Numeracy and ESOL have to gain a specialist teaching qualification in their subject area. The DTLLS qualification and programme will be embedded within this specialist qualification.
- FE lecturers have five years to complete their teaching qualification if taken in service.
- The FE teaching qualification will be the Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) if you are a graduate. If you are not a graduate then the qualification will be a Certificate of Education (CertEd). The CertEd has been extended to adult and community learning services and work-based learning providers.
- Please note that your FE teaching qualification does not qualify you to teach in schools. But if you are teaching under-16s in a college setting, you are qualified to undertake this teaching.
- For details of the FE qualifications, and for information about where such programmes are approved, any bursaries, grants or golden handshakes available to trainees, see the Lifelong Learning Sector Council website: www.excellencegateway.org.uk/node/57
- Lifelong Learning UK also has a very good helpdesk which can offer help and advice on FE teaching qualifications. You can call them on: **0300 303 1877**

Continuing professional development in further education

The changes in the requirements regarding FE teaching qualifications contain the condition that FE lecturers should register with the professional body, the Institute for Learning (IfL).

To maintain membership of IfL you must undertake 30 hours of continuing professional development (CPD) per year and this has to be recorded. The employer has the right to inspect this log but not approve its content. The IfL will monitor CPD logs and sample some to be inspected each year. You will be required to confirm online to IfL each year that you have completed 30 hours CPD. Further details of the IfL online log are given below.

Continuing professional development means maintaining, improving and broadening relevant knowledge and skills in your subject specialism, teaching and training, so that it has a positive impact on your teaching practice and the experience of learners. CPD can include attending an internal or external course, or reading a book. CPD is tailored to you and your role, and any activities you undertake in order to keep up to date with developments in a subject area or of changes in teaching methods will count as meaningful professional development, as long as you have reflected on how they have benefitted your professional practice. You should be able to answer the following questions:

- What professional development activities have you undertaken this year?
- Have you reflected on the learning you have gained from these activities?
- Have the activities and the reflection made a difference to how you teach or train?
- Can you show evidence of what the difference is and the impact it has made to learners, colleagues or the organisation in which you work?

USEFUL LINKS

- 1 For details of IfL, the benefits of joining, access to the REfLECT on-line log and more information on CPD visit: www.ifl.ac.uk
- 2 There is also information on the UCU website at: <http://bit.ly/cN2app>
- 3 UCU have also produced a tool kit explaining the changes to FE initial teacher training and CPD which can be found under Branch Resources: <http://bit.ly/98eRoL>

Professional formation in further education careers

The way in which FE teachers usually train and qualify is different from the path followed by school teachers. School teachers train to obtain their qualified teacher status (QTS) before starting work and then are required to complete a successful probationary year working in the classroom. Although there are a few pre-service FE teaching programmes, most FE lecturers undertake their professional qualification during their employment and there is no equivalent to the school teachers' probationary year. However, FE now has a period of what is termed 'professional formation'. This is the post-qualification process by which a teacher is able to gain Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS) by demonstrating through professional practice:

- the ability to effectively use the skills and knowledge gained while training
- the capacity to meet the occupational standards required of a teacher.

The professional formation process includes the completion of the appropriate qualification, evidence of numeracy and literacy skills at, or above, level 2,



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supporting testimony, the endorsement of the completed application by an appropriate person and a self-declaration of suitability.

The personalised elements include:

- an account of the candidate’s expertise in their subject area. This can be a mix of personal reflection on subject-related skills or expertise, and peer observation from a suitable expert witness
- evidence of teaching and learning which is an account of the candidate’s ability to effectively use the skills and knowledge gained through initial teacher training to deliver their subject to a range of learners. It could include, or be a mix of, a personal reflection on teaching and learning, peer or learner observation from a suitable expert witness, observation of teaching and learning and micro teaching which includes videos and reviews
- self-evaluation – an individual analysis of the candidate’s learning needs and goals for the next 12 months
- professional development planning – an individualised learning plan detailing the actions to be taken to address the needs and goals identified through self-assessment
- reflective practice – reflection on the impact of professional development on the candidate’s teaching practice, the benefit to learners and wider communities.



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Professional development in higher education

Most recruits to academic posts in universities either have a PhD in the subject they are teaching or are studying for an appropriate research qualification.

However, the Post-Compulsory Education and Training, Certificate in Education (pre-service), is the professional qualification for those wishing to teach in further education colleges, adult education, higher education and a wide range of other education and training settings outside the school sector.

There are also a variety of universities that run higher-level courses leading to a qualification for entry into higher education teaching, which have been nationally accredited by the Higher Education Academy. These lead to associate practitioner, registered practitioner and practitioner-level qualifications. There are also master’s-level courses.

In recent years higher education institutions have expanded the training and development opportunities on offer to academic and academic-related staff. The development of in-house teaching courses for new academic staff, in particular, has been a major priority for staff and educational development units. However, UCU has a number of criticisms of the approach adopted by institutions, including:

- the fragmentation of professional roles – the ‘teaching only’ approach
- an approach driven by costs rather than pedagogy
- a lack of consultation with practitioners over their development needs
- inappropriate course delivery
- an over-emphasis on innovation and virtual learning environments
- the neglect of hourly-paid part-time lecturers and fixed-term researchers.





UCU continues to argue for training and professional development that reflects:

- respect for teaching and learning support that academics find effective
- the promotion of links between research, scholarship and teaching
- professional autonomy and academic freedom
- a community of scholarship where staff and students contribute to the development of the teaching and research agenda
- a recognition of the European and international dimension to all of these issues, and the value of collaboration with fellow academics at these levels.

A positive union agenda for professional development might include:

- continuing professional development needs located in the context of the college, and determined in consultation with staff, on the basis of a model of peer support and shared practice eg peer-supported review.
- staff entitlement to sabbaticals
- the preservation of time for research and scholarship, sometimes referred to as self-managed time
- identified time and budget for development activities
- an agenda for professional development in the context of widening participation and increasing student diversity that is not mechanistic but stimulates debate on the curriculum and wider, academic implications
- identified time and budget for activities to support new staff, including hourly-paid part-timers, such as mentoring
- maintaining the developmental focus of appraisal – separate from issues to do with pay and conditions
- union involvement in determining staff priorities for formal training including content and delivery.

PROBATION FOR ACADEMIC STAFF

Since 2006 new academic staff have to complete a teaching and learning qualification as a requirement of probation. These teaching programmes are run by the employing institution but within an overall accreditation and standards framework established by the Higher Education Academy. The courses are often provided by the university’s education development, or teaching and learning, unit, and generally lead to a postgraduate qualification. The courses are likely to cover issues such as developing teaching practice, student learning and support, quality assurance, assessing student learning and course design and development.

The courses are meant to enable participants to become more competent, confident and reflective lecturers and, while these courses can be useful for staff new to higher education teaching, a number of critical observations have also been voiced. Surveys suggest that many new academics struggle to complete the extensive workloads demanded by the courses. Another widely voiced concern is that the content of the teaching is too generic and may be overly influenced by pedagogies in the humanities and the social sciences.

Nationally, UCU has raised these concerns with the Higher Education Academy, the body that oversees the accreditation of these courses. We would continue to welcome feedback from early career academics about their experiences on these courses.



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USEFUL LINKS 

- 1 **The Higher Education Academy (HEA)** which was established in 2004 seeks 'to help institutions, discipline groups and all staff to provide the best possible learning experience for their students'. In particular the HEA is responsible for accrediting over 200 institutional teaching programmes for new academic staff. The HEA website has a number of teaching resources for new academic staff at: <http://bit.ly/9vzp5B> and subject-specific advice is available through their Subject Centres at: <http://bit.ly/19mcvS>
- 2 **Vitae** is a national organisation concerned with the personal, professional and career development of doctoral researchers and research staff in higher education institutions and research institutes: <http://www.vitae.ac.uk/>

UCU learning representatives

UCU has responded to the issues regarding training and development in further education by creating a new role in UCU branches – learning representatives. Since 1997 UCU, along with other unions, have been appointing and training union learning representatives (ULRs), and there is legislation extending paid statutory time off to ULRs. UCU sees its ULRs performing two main functions:

- ULRs act as learning and development experts assisting branches to take up issues of initial training and CPD through the normal collective bargaining processes. UCU considers that these issues should be part of the process of collective bargaining with clear union policies for them and their implementation at college level.
- ULRs also have a role in giving individual UCU members information, advice and guidance on training and development issues.

If you are interested in learning more about what UCU learning representatives do or becoming one, go to www.ucu.org.uk/training or email training@ucu.org.uk



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