

UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY
PROGRAMME REVIEW: POSTGRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN
TERTIARY TEACHING
(PGCERTERTCHG)

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, HEALTH AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
SCHOOL OF EDUCATIONAL STUDIES & LEADERSHIP
(OCTOBER 28-29 2015)

CONTENTS

OVERVIEW, p.3

TERMS OF REFERENCE, p.3

PANEL, p.3

COMMENDATIONS, p.3

RESPONSES TO TERMS OF REFERENCE AND RECOMMENDATIONS, p.4

1. ACCEPTABILITY, p.4

1.1 Overall, does this programme meet standards acceptable to the panel for a University of Canterbury degree? p.4

RECOMMENDATION 1, p.4

1.2 Overall, does this programme meet standards acceptable to the panel for New Zealand degrees in this discipline? p.4

RECOMMENDATION 2, p.4

1.3 Overall, does this programme meet standards acceptable to the panel for international degrees in this discipline? p.4

RECOMMENDATION 3, p.5

1.4 National and international alignment of the certificate, p.5

2. CURRICULUM, p.5

2.1 How can this programme equip participants with the theories and teaching practice to implement the UC Graduate Profile? p.5

RECOMMENDATION 4, p.6

RECOMMENDATION 5, p.6

RECOMMENDATION 6, p.6

2.2 Assessment and credit, p.6

RECOMMENDATION 7, p.6

2.3 Optional courses, p.7

RECOMMENDATION 8, p.7

3. PLACE, p.7

3.1 The place of the certificate in the wider university, p.7

3.2 The location of the certificate, p.7

3.3 Admission, p.7

RECOMMENDATION 9, p.7

3.4 Recognition of prior learning, p.7

3.5 Making the certificate compulsory, p.7

3.6 Promoting UC staff participation in the certificate, p.8

RECOMMENDATION 10, p.8

RECOMMENDATION 11, p.8

RECOMMENDATION 12, p.8

RECOMMENDATION 13, p.8

3.7 Promoting the certificate more widely, p.8

RECOMMENDATION 14, p.9

3.8 The Board of Studies, p.9

RECOMMENDATION 15, p.9

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS, p.10

APPENDIX: LETTER REPORTING COLLEGE OF ARTS SURVEY, p. 12

OVERVIEW

The review panel found the Postgraduate Certificate in Tertiary Teaching at the University of Canterbury to be a high-quality programme, staffed by dedicated and passionate academics, and housed within a college committed to providing world-class education. At the same time, we found that the complicated history of the certificate, some uncertainty around structure and delivery, and a lack of broad institutional ownership of the qualification have hampered its ability to fulfil its potential. We found that issues bearing upon the value and effectiveness of the qualification fall into three broad categories: firstly, the **acceptability** of the programme as an internal, national and international qualification; secondly, the design of the **curriculum**, which encompasses both strengths and weaknesses; and, thirdly, the issue of the certificate's **place** within the College of Education, Health and Human Development, the wider university, and alongside similar courses here and overseas.

We hope that the following commendations, comments and recommendations under these categories will play a useful part in further developing the Postgraduate Certificate in Tertiary Teaching into a valuable instrument for enhancing tertiary teaching skills, disseminating research-led tertiary teaching best-practice, promoting excellence, realising strategic academic outcomes and demonstrating institution-wide commitment to quality teaching.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The terms of reference for the review requested both a broad overview of the programme and consideration of particular elements. Our broad overview has been guided by the 'Issues to be Considered by Panels' section of the UC Academic Reviews Policy and Guidelines (pp. 8-9), but, as requested, we have paid particular attention to

- The structure, content and delivery of the certificate,
- The role of the programme in helping deliver the UC Graduate Profile,
- The issue of whether enrolment in the course should be compulsory for all new teaching staff at UC,
- The alignment of the programme with similar programmes nationally and internationally.

PANEL

The panel convened to hear submissions on Wednesday 28 and Thursday 29 October 2015. The panel members were

- Professor Paul Millar, Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor College of Arts, University of Canterbury (Chair),
- Professor Emily Parker, Department of Chemistry, University of Canterbury,
- Associate Professor Liz Jones, Director, Centre for Academic Development, Victoria University of Wellington,
- Dr Sean Sturm, Head of the Academic Development Group, Centre for Learning and Research in Higher Education, University of Auckland.

COMMENDATIONS

- We commend the staff for their admirable attitude to upskilling themselves, particularly with respect to supporting teaching that fosters the 'bicultural competence and confidence' attribute of the UC Graduate Profile;
- We commend the enthusiasm of staff for the programme. Their passionate commitment to developing tertiary teaching and the close collegial relationships they develop with participants promotes a sense that this is a collaborative programme of considerable value;

- We commend the programme for its high scholarly credentials: courses are informed by research and current best practice at UC, with excellent use made of the teaching resources and expertise of colleagues across the university;
- We also commend the staff for their rigour in preserving the academic nature of the qualification and resisting its transformation into a hybrid programme that attempts to deliver both quality academic outcomes and professional development imperatives;
- Finally, we commend the College of Education, Health and Human Development for its commitment to, and high-level endorsement of, the programme.

RESPONSES TO TERMS OF REFERENCE AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. ACCEPTABILITY

1.1 Overall, does this programme meet standards acceptable to the panel for a University of Canterbury degree?

Overall, this is a quality academic programme, thanks in large part to a learner-centred and experiential approach that focuses on participants' professional practice, with the aim of producing reflective tertiary teachers informed by research in the scholarship of teaching and learning. We have some reservations about aspects of assessment in the programme, which we discuss below at 2.2. Also, a clearer indication of how the programme delivers on its graduate profile would be valuable. This could be achieved by an exercise in curriculum mapping to demonstrate the alignment of learning objectives and assessment tasks for each course with the programme's graduate attributes to indicate clearly how the programme delivers on the graduate profile of the certificate.

***RECOMMENDATION 1:** Undertake curriculum mapping to demonstrate the alignment of learning objectives and assessment tasks for each course with the programme's graduate attributes in order to indicate clearly how the programme delivers on the graduate profile of the certificate.*

1.2 Overall, does this programme meet standards acceptable to the panel for New Zealand degrees in this discipline?

We found the course content appropriate, though workload seemed a little heavier than comparable 15-point courses. It was difficult to be clear about the extent to which workload requirements had changed proportionally when there was a move from 30-point to 15-point courses. Where there was evidence—for example, the large number of required readings for most courses—it did appear that the workload remained closer to that of a 30-point course. We think that 15-point courses should be retained, but that greater guidance about the purpose of each reading should be given to clarify the hierarchy, and thus priority, of readings.

***RECOMMENDATION 2:** Ensure that workload is appropriate for a 15-point course by clarifying the hierarchy, and thus priority, of readings.*

1.3 Overall, does this programme meet standards acceptable to the panel for international degrees in this discipline?

Such comparisons are difficult, as this type of programme varies by country. This certificate is similar to those offered in the UK. It is more demanding than similar programmes in Australia, which tend to be more development-focused. The best of these programmes in New Zealand tend, as this one does, to have a strong academic focus, complemented elsewhere by developmental opportunities offered by Human Resources and, in UC's case, the Academic Services Group (ASG).

The value of the PGCertTertTchg programme in promoting reflective teaching practice through research-informed courses cannot be overstated. The combination of the certificate and developmental courses offered by the ASG provides UC lecturers with a quality package of development opportunities. We note and endorse the importance placed in the programme's Self-Review Report on the key stakeholder relationship with the ASG and, in particular, the observation on page 5 of the Self-Review Report that routine access to data collected by the ASG's institutional research unit 'would provide an opportunity to link to, and situate the programme within, the wider teaching and learning culture of the university.'

RECOMMENDATION 3: *Academic Services Group and PGCertTertTchg staff should explore ways to allow routine access to data collected by the institutional research unit for use as a learning resource.*

1.4 National and international alignment of the certificate

We gave considerable thought to the certificate's alignment with current national and international developments in tertiary teaching accreditation. Potentially, the most significant development is that desirability and feasibility of pursuing UK Higher Education Academy accreditation for tertiary teachers in New Zealand is being examined by a number of universities. However, as this situation is fluid at present, we do not have a recommendation to make at this time.

2. CURRICULUM

2.1 How can this programme equip participants with the theories and teaching practice to implement the UC Graduate Profile?

2.1(i) We see the programme as playing a potentially useful future role in equipping academics to foster the five attributes of the UC graduate profile to produce students that are

- Critically competent in a core academic discipline,
- Employable, innovative and enterprising,
- Biculturally competent and confident,
- Engaged with the community,
- Globally aware.

This role is reflected in the existing course content. However, it is constrained in a number of ways:

- The graduate profile is only one of several aspects to be considered in course and curriculum design.
- It has to be integrated into what is already a full curriculum in what is only a 60-point programme.
- It is only now being introduced; therefore, no graduates of the certificate have had a chance to integrate it into their courses and curricula.
- It is being implemented independently by Colleges to reflect their strengths and practices so can be addressed only at a level that is relatively high and generic in the certificate.

These factors make it difficult to evaluate the level of constructive alignment to the graduate profile of the certificate's assessment and learning activities, given that the profile is complex and sets high expectations. Before committing to support delivery of the profile, a curriculum mapping exercise similar to the one recommended at 1.1 could usefully demonstrate ways in which the profile can be aligned with the rest of the certificate's curriculum.

RECOMMENDATION 4: *As the feasibility of delivering the UC graduate profile is explored, a curriculum mapping exercise could usefully demonstrate ways in which the profile can be aligned with the rest of the curriculum of the certificate.*

2.1(ii) One graduate attribute where the certificate can play a meaningful role is the attribute of bicultural competence and confidence. We have commended the staff for their admirable attitude to upskilling themselves to support the delivery of teaching to foster this attribute. We strongly encourage even greater alignment and collaboration with the office of the AVC Māori to ensure that the UC Māori strategy is understood and implemented by the UC academic community.

RECOMMENDATION 5: *That staff collaborate closely with the office of the AVC Māori and Māori staff to ensure alignment in support for the bicultural competence and confidence attribute of the UC graduate profile and the implementation of UC Māori strategy in the development of teaching modules.*

2.1(iii) In a similar vein, we strongly encourage greater alignment and continuing collaboration with the Pacific Development Team and the Macmillan Brown Centre for Pacific Studies to ensure that the UC Pasifika strategy is understood and implemented by the UC academic community.

RECOMMENDATION 6: *That staff collaborate closely with Pasifika colleagues to ensure alignment in support for the implementation of UC Pasifika strategy in the development of teaching modules.*

2.2 Assessment and credit

We were concerned with the issue of the academics staffing the certificate being reluctant to grade colleagues taking the certificate. While we appreciated the argument that adopting a pass/fail assessment policy contributes to making the certificate a highly collaborative learning endeavour, we are not convinced this meets either the monitoring requirements of the UC assessment policy or the need for accountability to the institution and stakeholders. Auckland, VUW and Otago grade their equivalent programmes and undertake external moderation of assessment, and we think it is appropriate to consider benchmarking now rather than waiting to see whether ‘the HEA scheme comes to fruition’ (Self Review Report, Section 9). The pass/fail regime may also be the reason why documentation dealing with assessment and moderation was not entirely clear; students talked of a lack of transparency and rigour in assessment policies and practices, and laxity in processes for submission and completion. It is difficult to see how the HOS or Director would be able easily to identify issues with teaching and assessment without the means to monitor such things. The panel sees this as an area where management or the Board of Studies can support the staff delivering the certificate to foster rigor and set in place a peer review process to monitor quality and to deal with the difficult tension of a course delivered by academics for academics. It may be that the issue of colleagues assessing colleagues could be used as a teaching opportunity. A tool such as Small Group Instructional Diagnosis (SGID) might be considered to explore this issue.

RECOMMENDATION 7: *That the certificate move from a pass/fail assessment policy to a grading policy, with College management and/or the Board of Studies leading a thorough review of assessment policies and practices to ensure internal and external standards for monitoring assessment are met.*

2.3 Optional courses

We were asked to consider whether any of the courses should be optional or modularized. We came to the view that it is preferable to offer a majority of core courses to maintain cohesion. While some modularization might be worth pursuing, we are not in favour of a suite of optional courses; the risk of fragmentation should be avoided. However, we do see potential for one course to offer interchangeable modules. Modules on postgraduate supervision, teaching technologies, or culturally responsive teaching might be valuable.

***RECOMMENDATION 8:** That staff consider developing a modularized course to allow space to focus on new developments in tertiary teaching.*

3. PLACE

3.1 The place of the certificate in the wider university

Overall, our impression is that this programme is fulfilling its role and meeting its market, helping to develop effective teaching practice across the university. It is part of a suite of opportunities to develop teaching that range across teaching as an academic activity, which is the focus of this qualification, through to more focused professional development courses offered through HR.

3.2 The location of the certificate

The panel received a strong message from some submitters that to give the programme broader appeal and make it strongly pan-university it should be taken out of the College of Education, Health and Human Development and located centrally, perhaps reporting directly to the Academic Services Group. While the panel appreciates the reasons given for such a proposal, UC precedent is that academic programmes should be delivered out of Colleges. For this reason, we recommend that the certificate remain housed in its current location. We do think that the broader university can do more to take ownership of the qualification; to which end a number of the following recommendations speak.

3.3 Admission

It can be surprisingly difficult for an interested new staff member to enrol in the programme due to an admission process that duplicates the verification of qualifications that is required by UC's appointment process.

***RECOMMENDATION 9:** Work needs to be done to streamline admission processes, particularly for existing academics appointed from overseas whose eligibility has been recognised through other means.*

3.4 Recognition of prior learning

We considered whether recognition of prior learning might be invoked to enrol staff who might want to enrol in a number of courses but are put off by the need to complete the entire certificate. We decided against recommending recognition of prior learning because both the panel and stakeholders considered it important that the course remain UC-specific and cohort-based.

3.5 Making the certificate compulsory

We were asked to consider whether the certificate should be made compulsory for all new staff. We agreed with majority feedback that it should not. The success of the programme depends upon willing engagement and collegial collaboration in the learning enterprise, and compulsion would undermine the ethos and effectiveness of the certificate.

3.6 Promoting UC staff participation in the certificate

3.6(i) If enrolments in the certificate are to be increased from right across the university, its market must first be understood. It is likely that this qualification will always have a limited cohort in its current form, in which case there is little point in trying to advertise it widely or vigorously. Developing a market profile for the certificate might clarify this situation. The only analysis of the cohort we were offered was a small survey conducted by the College of Arts Learning and Teaching Committee, which suggested that there was interest in the qualification but that barriers to entry and participation existed. The staff and Board of Studies should consider the collection of more detailed data. The letter reporting on this survey is attached as Appendix 1.

RECOMMENDATION 10: *An effort should be made to understand the market for the certificate by systematically exploring the potential for further participation across the university and understanding the barriers to engagement. Issues identified by the College of Arts 'professional development' survey should be considered in any market analysis exercise.*

3.6(ii) Rather than compelling staff to enrol in the programme (see 3.5), it is our view that more concerted effort needs to go into incentivizing staff to enrol, colleges to support efforts to recruit new and existing staff into the programme, and the SMT to robustly endorse the certificate as a tool to develop teaching. We would recommend that incentives to participation such as workload relief and recognition in promotion rounds be introduced.

RECOMMENDATION 11: *Incentives for staff to enrol in the certificate should be developed, including workload relief and recognition in promotion rounds, especially within and between lecturer and senior lecturer bands.*

RECOMMENDATION 12: *That senior management regularly makes it clear in relevant forums that the PGCertTertTchg is a centrally endorsed programme, and that staff participation will greatly enhance the case for promotion within and between lecturer and senior lecturer bands.*

RECOMMENDATION 13: *That awareness of the PGCertTertTchg in the Learning and Teaching Committee be strengthened and enhanced through regular reporting by the BOS on its progress and outcomes at LTC meetings.*

3.7 Promoting the certificate more widely

The certificate as it stands is less a professional development course for aspiring academics than a resource for developing the teaching capability of appointed academics from within UC. However, a modified version of the certificate aimed at PhDs, postdoctoral fellows, tutors and aspiring tertiary teachers from outside UC might be a valuable way to forward the careers of such individuals and reach beyond the certificate's existing cohort. Again, the priority is to understand the market and barriers to participation before investigating modifications to the papers on offer. Collaboration with the UC Postgraduate office to assess the value of such a modified course as a significant development opportunity for postgraduate students is recommended.

RECOMMENDATION 14: *An effort should be made to understand the broader market for the certificate by systematically exploring the potential for participation and barriers to engagement amongst late-stage PhDs, postdoctoral fellows, tutors and aspiring tertiary teachers from outside UC. In assessing whether the certificate will have value for postgraduate students we recommend collaboration with the UC Postgraduate Office.*

3.8 The Board of Studies

We encountered the perception that the qualification was captured by one college. The Board of Studies should play an even greater role in breaking down such perceptions and increasing enrolment, and the AAC should review the membership and operation of the BoS to further emphasise that this is a cross-University qualification of value to all colleges. The BoS should include senior representatives from each college who can advocate for the certificate, ensure that it reflects the specific needs of their disciplines, and communicate the value of the programme to academic staff at any stage in their careers. In addition, the BoS should be chaired by the DVC (Academic) or his nominee, rather than the Dean of the College of Education, Health and Human Development. This should do much to emphasise the pan-university ownership of the certificate and allow the Dean of Education, Health and Human Development to advocate more strongly on behalf of the certificate at BoS meetings.

RECOMMENDATION 15: *We recommend that AAC review membership of the BoS to strengthen pan-university ownership of the certificate and that the DVC (Academic) or his nominee chair the BoS.*

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1: *Undertake curriculum mapping to demonstrate the alignment of learning objectives and assessment tasks for each course with the programme's graduate attributes in order to indicate clearly how the programme delivers on the graduate profile of the certificate.*

RECOMMENDATION 2: *Ensure that workload is appropriate for a 15-point course by clarifying the hierarchy, and thus priority, of readings.*

RECOMMENDATION 3: *Academic Services Group and PGCertTertTchg staff should explore ways to allow routine access to data collected by the institutional research unit for use as a learning resource.*

RECOMMENDATION 4: *As the feasibility of delivering the UC graduate profile is explored, a curriculum mapping exercise could usefully demonstrate ways in which the profile can be aligned with the rest of the curriculum of the certificate.*

RECOMMENDATION 5: *That staff collaborate closely with the office of the AVC Māori and Māori staff to ensure alignment in support for the bicultural competence and confidence attribute of the UC graduate profile and the implementation of UC Māori strategy in the development of teaching modules.*

RECOMMENDATION 6: *That staff collaborate closely with Pasifika colleagues to ensure alignment in support for the implementation of UC Pasifika strategy in the development of teaching modules.*

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RECOMMENDATION 8: *That staff consider developing a modularized course to allow space to focus on new developments in tertiary teaching.*

RECOMMENDATION 9: *Work needs to be done to streamline admission processes, particularly for existing academics appointed from overseas whose eligibility has been recognised through other means.*

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SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS CONT.

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RECOMMENDATION 15: *We recommend that AAC review membership of the BoS to strengthen pan-university ownership of the certificate and that the DVC (Academic) or his nominee chair the BoS.*

APPENDIX: LETTER REPORTING COLLEGE OF ARTS SURVEY

College of Arts

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23 October 2015

Tēnā koutou

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission on the Postgraduate Certificate in Tertiary Teaching. I write in my role as the Associate Dean Undergraduate of Arts and chair of the College of Arts Learning and Teaching Committee.

The committee set professional development opportunities in teaching as one of its priorities for 2015. Every member of the committee is fully aware of this qualification, one member of the committee has gained it, and one or two others have attempted it. The general “word on the street” about the PGCertTT is that it’s a worthwhile qualification to earn. Unfortunately, one of the most commonly heard remarks (again, anecdotal) is “I would really love to enrol in the PGCertTT, but I just cannot make the time while I’m teaching, and one isn’t supposed to do it while on sabbatical leave.”

With these remarks in mind, the CoA LTC conducted a short survey about professional development in teaching using the Learn “quiz” function and presented the results at a Teaching Week session. This is by no means a scientific survey. Nonetheless, the 51 respondents from across all five colleges produced the following statistics:

- 42% put development of teaching at the top (14%) or middle (28%) of their priority list
- 37% said they had considered enrolling in the PGCertTT (41% said they hadn’t, and 9% had completed it or were enrolled)
- Lack of time during the semester and PBRF pressure were the main reasons cited for not enrolling in the PGCertTT

Concerning the length of professional development courses and of individual sessions:

- Mini-courses of 2-6 hours were strongly supported (and were a more popular option than blended or distance learning by a margin of 2:1)
- Individual sessions of 1-2 hours and one-day or two-day sessions received a great deal of support, but there was little support for a 1hr x 6 weeks or a summer course of 4hrs x 6 weeks
- Late afternoon slots during the semester or during term breaks received a lot of support, with 7-9 pm (semester and term breaks) and 9-3pm during term breaks in second place
- 54% support a “punch card” system of taking short courses that add up to a larger qualification

- 63% would like a menu of short courses (similar to the Academic Skills website) so that they can choose the topics they think are most relevant to their needs

These results do not in any way reflect badly on the PGCertTT. What they do highlight is that staff responding to the survey would like shorter courses that can be completed at the margins of working hours, or in the evenings, and that staff can “self-diagnose” their teaching development needs.

Though the results are not scientific, they suggest that a wider survey of staff on the subject of teaching development and the mode and timing of the delivery would produce valuable data for the future development of the PGCertTT. It might be of some benefit to ask staff what areas they would like to develop.

It is the task of the panel to report on the quality of the PGCertTT. Even so, the best qualification in the world is of little use if the target audience cannot take advantage of it.

Ngā mihi

Alison Griffith
Associate Dean of Arts (Undergraduate)