

## **INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE: EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORT 2013-2014 - PGCE (PCET) (full-time and part-time programmes)**

Dear Ms Donovan,

I am writing further to your External Examiner's report for the above programme(s). Your Report has been considered by the Cardiff School of Social Sciences in accordance with our approved procedures. I am, therefore, now in a position to respond on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor to the main points you had raised.

### Issues Highlighted

Your Report raised issue(s) which have been referred for consideration by the School. The following response has been provided on behalf of the School.

#### ***"[1, 7th para and 4, 3rd para] the External Examiner's indication that there "may be opportunities within the programme review to effect further enhancement of the opportunities for research" and related comments***

*The PGCE team regularly review the PGCE curriculum to ensure the Programmes are cutting edge and meet the needs of the learners and continue to provide Students with the knowledge, understanding and set of competencies required to operate effectively and successfully in the Lifelong Learning Sector and provide high quality teaching to their own learners.*

*As part of curriculum development, a meeting was held between the Programme Director and the External Examiner, in her capacity as 'advisor' and critical friend, and the intention of revalidating the programmes was discussed. A key area of development within teacher education and training is the role of research and research informed practice to develop and enhance pedagogic knowledge and shape the education/teaching landscape. During the programme revalidation opportunities for research will be explored.*

*By undertaking a programme review this would also provide an opportunity to align the PGCE structure with the University's to remove 10 credit modules and develop 20 and/or 30 credit modules. Currently we have a suite of 4 x 10, one 20 and one 60 credit modules. Discussions are underway to review programme content and ensure congruence and fitness for purpose. This will reflect the client groups accessing the full and part-time programmes of study, i.e. the full-time being an ITT pre-service provision and the part-time programmes in-service.*

*What is problematic at this point in time is that the Sector does not have a set of Professional Standards to work to or be evaluated against since LLUK and SVUC were discontinued by the UK Government and our accreditation expired in 2013. We are anticipating the development of new Professional Standards for Wales and we have been advised that these will be available in 2015 (England have a new set of Professional Standards developed by the Education and Training Foundation and these are already in place for 2014). Due to this delay in standard development, programme development will be postponed until their release (although numerous PGCE team meetings are scheduled to discuss the curriculum and overall aims of the programmes). The team will then align with the Professional Standards and engage in School and University approval processes as appropriate.*

#### ***[1, 9th para and 4, 4th para] the identification of "key skills" and "CPD needs of students" as further possible areas for review***

*A key challenge for the Welsh Government is improving the levels of literacy and numeracy in Wales and this priority forms part of the Literacy and Numeracy*

*Framework. The PGCE programmes of study promote the development and integration of these key elements within its curriculum. To support and upskill students in the areas of literacy and numeracy, developmental workshops are scheduled. Students self-assess and diagnose their strengths, weaknesses and identify development needs. Dedicated practitioners then provide upskilling workshops over a period of time. It is extremely important that our Student Teachers are able to help and support their students in these key areas, and therefore must themselves be competent in these key areas in order to provide this support.*

*In addition to these workshops, specialists from FE have been engaged in for the 2014 intake to provide further 'key skill' support by demonstrating how key skill development and enhancement can be integrated within the students' subject discipline. Technical competence, expertise and upskilling are key priorities of the PGCE.*

**[3, 3rd para] the suggested "further scope for the comprehensive mentor training and development to be enhanced through review" and related comments.**

*In addition to a placement fee awarded to the external organisation for hosting a student teacher, the School Board has authorised a release fee per Mentor per year to attend off the job training/up-skilling in mentoring and/or professional updating at the University. This release fee will hopefully encourage more employers to release their staff to attend these events. Mentor events are scheduled for December and the Programme Director will continue to provide on the job support as has been done in the past. Assessment processes and protocols are discussed and all Mentors/Assessors/Placement Officers are provided with a comprehensive handbook and access to all documentation both in hard copy and electronically (via the Mentor portal).*

*We have and will continue to work collaboratively with our partner colleagues which are a key strength of the PGCE here at Cardiff. Providing mentor training addresses some of the CPD requirements (30 hours per year) that mentors must engage in as part of professional updating and continuous professional development. A certificate of attendance is awarded as evidence of engagement."*

### Positive Comments

The School and University are pleased to note your positive comments on the School's provision including:

- a. **[1, 2 and 3] your positive indications regarding the programme structure, academic standards and assessment process.**
- b. **[2, third para, 3, first para and 6, first para] your commendation of "high quality feedback threaded throughout the programme";**
- c. **[3, 2<sup>nd</sup> para] your indications that in "many cases students have fed back very positively on the transformative quality of subject and mentor support";**
- d. **[4, final para] your positive comments in respect of "technology enhanced learning and the use of some blended activity"**
- e **[5] your commendation of preparation/induction support received from the School;**
- f. **[6] your particular commendation of identified elements of the programme.**

I hope that you will find this response satisfactory and thank you for your service as External Examiner.

In order to meet the expectations of the QAA Quality Code, both the External Examiner Annual Report and this Institutional Response will be published on Registry web pages and will be available publically.

The University's provision of the formal Institutional Response is not intended to constrain direct communication between schools and their External Examiners. Schools are encouraged to discuss with their External Examiners any matters of detail raised in their Reports and, more widely, any issues impacting on the quality and standards of awards, including possible changes to programmes.

We are most grateful for your comments and for your support in this matter.

Dr S L Williamson

for Dr C B Turner  
Academic Registrar