

Report on the regional development programme: Quality Teaching in Higher Education

Background

A group of teaching and learning academic development specialists at the four Western Cape universities met during 2009 to consider the development of a jointly offered Post Graduate Diploma in Higher Education (PGDHE). The group approached CHEC with the idea of running some short courses which would allow the group to pilot versions of the modules being developed for the PGDHE. The initial thinking was that those participating in the short courses might receive retrospective accreditation should the registration of the PGDHE be successful (although this may not be possible).

Marketing and Administration

CHEC agreed to be responsible for the administration of the proposed regional programme, leaving the project team free to focus on the academic delivery of the short courses. It was agreed to pilot two courses in 2010: Course 1 - *Teaching and Learning in HE*; and Course 2- *Assessment in HE*. Each course consisted of four weekly two-hour sessions. A fee of R500 per person per course was charged and this fee was collected by CHEC from the universities. The fee covers admin costs, venue hire, teas, printing etc. Roughly half of the R39 500 raised is still available and this will be held by CHEC to pay for materials which might be needed in the future and to keep the fee at the current level for 2011.

A brochure (attached) was designed and circulated electronically for the marketing of the courses within the four universities. Slightly different approaches to the marketing of the courses was adopted in each university. Eight places were reserved for each institution. Interest exceeded expectations at UCT and CPUT, where waiting lists had to be held. When UWC and SU did not take up all their allotted places, these were filled from the waiting lists.

Attendance

The final take up statistics are given below.

	Course 1 : Teaching & Learning in HE		Course 2: Assessment in HE	
	Attended	Certificate	Attended	Certificate (estimate)
UCT	12	7	6	2
CPUT	14	14	15	7
UWC	5	4	6	0
SU	6	5	8	5
Total	37	30	35	14

As is the case for most training and development courses, some people cancelled their participation or sent apologies just prior to the course dates and in a few instances there were absentees either for the whole or for part of the course.

Post-course assignments were set. A certificate was given for attendance and completion of the assignment. Certificates distinguish between two standards: either “completion” or “merit”. The certificate is simply a CHEC certificate as the courses are not accredited. CHEC applied to the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) for Continued Professional Development (CPD) points for those who attended and who are in clinical positions, but regrettably the application was unsuccessful. Correspondence from the HPCSA noted that *“Improving our role as teachers in creating better health professionals is too indirect to qualify for CPD”*. Given the inconsistency between approaches to CPD points by different councils, CHEC was asked to pursue the matter with further queries.

Significance of CHEC Support

The CHEC courses have allowed the academic development specialists to assess the level of interest and demand while the PGDHE is being planned. Collaboration amongst a new team tends to be fragile, and logistical arrangements provided by CHEC, enhanced by the experience of many years of organising short courses, provided a substantial degree of motivation and support. At a reflection meeting after the second course, the academic development specialists/facilitators mentioned the advantages of the collaboration in the form of their own learning and professional development due to the joint planning and teaching. A new “community of practice” is emerging. They reported that the participants/students enjoyed learning with participants from other institutions. This has enhanced inter-institutional collaboration in the Western Cape. The support provided by CHEC was efficient and pleasant and at the final reflection meeting held by the team on 12 October 2010, attended by Nasima Badsha and Joy Fish, CHEC was thanked.

Way forward

The teaching and learning in higher education and assessment courses will be repeated in 2011. Two additional short courses, ICTs in Education, and Citizenship, Inclusion and Difference, will also be offered in 2011. The offering of short courses in 2012 is still to be decided.

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