

University of Cambridge: Programme Specifications

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POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA IN TRAINING, LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

1	Awarding body	University of Cambridge
2	Teaching institution	University of Cambridge Institute of Continuing Education
3	Accreditation details	The Faculty of Education
4	Name of final award	Advanced Diploma
5	Programme title	Postgraduate Diploma in Training, Learning & Development
6	JACS code(s)	X300
7	Relevant QAA benchmark statement(s)	Education Studies
8	Qualifications framework level	FHEQ Level 7
9	Date specification produced/ last revised	May 2010 (Approved by Faculty Board)
10	Date specification last reviewed	June 2011

Aims

The aims of the programme are to:

1. provide a solid academic base in the fields of learning, development and adult education
2. provide a framework, informed by current thinking and theory, for understanding aspects of human development and learning
3. enable students to develop an understanding and a critical awareness of the role of learning and development in a knowledge-based economy
4. provide a pragmatic insight into the processes and systems required to conceptualise, develop and deliver practical and relevant learning and development programmes in a variety of contexts for different client groups
5. enable students to explore analytical processes and tools that will develop critical thinking skills in assessing learning and development opportunities and subsequently to devise appropriate strategies and tactics to use these skills

Learning outcomes

On successful completion of the programme, students will be able to demonstrate the following learning outcomes:

Knowledge and Understanding

1. comprehensive knowledge and a critical understanding of current concepts, issues and challenges related to learning, development and adult education
2. in-depth knowledge and a critical understanding of key and current theories that underpin learning, development and adult education

3. in-depth knowledge and a critical understanding of how to recognise and address the challenges faced in developing and delivering meaningful learning and development programmes
4. awareness of personal responsibility and professional codes of conduct in the facilitation of learning and development activities
5. understanding of key business and management concepts (including marketing, financial management, planning and copyright and intellectual property issues) and the critical importance of their interplay in learning and development practice

Cognitive/Intellectual Skills

1. ability to critically evaluate concepts and theories underpinning learning and development as an applied area of study as evidence to support recommendations made (reviewing reliability, validity and significance)
2. ability to identify and define a concept or idea with potential for application in a new training, learning and development context
3. ability to demonstrate confidence and flexibility in identifying and defining complex problems in order to apply appropriate knowledge and skills to their solution
4. ability to analyse new situations or abstract data using objective and logical criteria to make informed and critical judgements
5. ability to consider and respond to the practical applications and limitations of concepts and theories in the development of practical and innovative learning solutions

Transferable Skills

1. self-evaluation to be achieved through demonstrating confidence in the application of their own criteria of judgement, challenging received opinions, and reflecting on action by making use of feedback
2. autonomy to be achieved by taking responsibility for their own work and by critically analysing these tasks or activities
3. strategic thinking realised through demonstrating their ability to apply a strategy to an idea, project or problem to achieve an effective conclusion
4. situational analysis through demonstrating their ability to analyse a situation or information and competently undertaking reasonably straight-forward research tasks with minimum guidance
5. communication and presentation skills to be achieved through engaging effectively in debate in a professional manner and producing detailed and coherent project reports presented in a professional and confident manner
6. problem-solving skills manifested through identifying and defining complex problems and applying appropriate knowledge and methods to their solution
7. leadership, management and team work skills developed and demonstrated through interacting effectively within a team learning environment and recognising, supporting and being proactive in the various aspects of leadership (students will demonstrate an ability to negotiate in a professional context and manage conflict)

Level 7 Criteria

Achieving the Learning Outcomes above will meet the criteria required for a candidate completing a qualification at FHEQ Level 7:

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences
- demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level
- continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level

And holders will have:

- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring:
 - the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility
 - decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations
 - the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development

(QAA 264 08/08 at <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/fheq/>)

Teaching and learning methods

The Postgraduate Diploma offers a range of teaching and learning methods designed to suit the needs of adult professionals who are combining part-time study with full- or part-time work. An introduction to the essential strategies, concepts and theories in each area of study will be provided through short blocks of attendance in Cambridge and structured on-line inputs. These will offer participants an opportunity to debate topics with subject experts and with their fellow students. Participants will be expected to undertake reading and research to extend their understanding, guided (but not limited) by a reading list provided by the course tutor.

Periods of self-managed study will be enhanced through access to a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), which will enable students and tutors to consolidate and expand upon the taught components of the course. The VLE will also be used as the forum for a structured on-line exercise in discussing and analysing a subject-relevant case study. Participants will be encouraged, throughout the programme, to draw on their professional experience and to reflect on the relevance of that experience to the concepts and theories presented in the course teaching and reading. It is expected that, as adult learners, participants will manage their study-time responsibly and will actively engage in reflection on, and analysis of, their learning on the programme.

Assessment methods

Each course in the programme requires successful completion of two assignments. The first of these assignments is a formative assessment, which must be submitted by the end of Week 5 of the course. The second assignment is a summative assessment that must be submitted by the end of Week 10 of the course. Both will be written assignments, which must be submitted electronically in the format specified in the course and programme materials. The precise nature of each assignment will be determined by the course tutor and the teaching team. Formats will therefore vary according to the topics and requirements of the course but may include the following: formal essay; case study analysis; description and analysis of professional performance; reflection on a critical incident and its contribution to learning; completion of a learning log or diary; creation of a business plan or process design for a learning event.

Assignment 1 will be a task-based activity requiring a rationale for the solution to the task, which will be between 1,500 and 2,000 words. Artefacts produced as the foundation of the task-based activity do not count toward the work count, nor does the bibliography provided. All materials produced for Assignment 1 such as the artefact, rationale and bibliography must be submitted to the course tutor using the VLE. Students will be given feedback on the assignment and it will be used to assess performance and progress on the course. Assignment 1 does not count toward the final grade awarded for the course, but will be marked in accordance with the assessment criteria as a preparation for the completion of Assignment 2.

Assignment 2 will be a summative assessment, for example an essay, the nature of which will be determined by the course tutor and approved by the teaching team. Assignment 2 will be between 2,500 and 3,000 words excluding footnotes, endnotes and the bibliography. It will be formally assessed and the marks from this assignment will constitute 100% of the marks for the course. Full details will be provided in the information accompanying each course.

All assignments will be double marked and feedback provided in a timely fashion through the Programme Manager using the VLE. However, students should be aware that final marks are dependent upon approval by the university exam moderation process. For full details of the process for examination, submission, re-sit and appeals, students should consult the Institute's Student Handbook for this programme.

In addition to Assignments 1 and 2, candidates for the whole Postgraduate Diploma in Training, Learning and Development will be required to write a final 'commentary' at the end of year two of the course of 4,000 words. The six summative assignments (Assignment 2) and the commentary will be considered as a whole and will need to show progression, at FHEQ level 7, in professional learning. The commentary, as with all assignments, will be double marked by two members of the Institute's Tutor Panel (and/or its permanent staff) and will be subject to the Institute's process of internal, University and external moderation. Students will be directed to commence work on the commentary in week 5 of Course 6 for submission one month after the completion of Course 6.

The commentary, as a terminal assignment, should make links between the six Postgraduate Diploma summative assessments which:

- demonstrates a conceptual and theoretical understanding of the substantive topics addressed in the assignments
- demonstrates how this understanding has progressed over the research for and writing of the six assignments
- discusses developments in personal and/or organisational learning
- summarises the impact, where appropriate, of the six assignments on colleagues, organisations and/or workplace practice and policy

The commentary will be assessed against the same criteria as those for the six summative assignments (Assignment 2). See: *Postgraduate Diploma in TLD: Notes for Panel Tutors on Assessment and Assessment Criteria*. The commentary will be weighted as equivalent to one Course Assignment 2 in the calculation of a student's final percentage mark and grade for the Postgraduate Diploma in Training, Learning and Development (Distinction, Pass or Fail).

The maximum total word count for assignments submitted for the Postgraduate Diploma in Training, Learning and Developments is 22,000.

Programme structure

The programme is offered at FHEQ Level 7 (M Level) and attracts 120 credits. It is a part-time programme of study, consisting of six courses, each of which attracts 20 credits. All courses are compulsory to achieve the Postgraduate Diploma but are also available to be taken as individual, stand-alone courses. Each course follows the same basic cycle and is organised to provide participants with a sound and predictable framework within which to achieve the specified learning outcomes. Participants will have the opportunity to experience a range of teaching and learning methods both during face-to-face contact with tutors and while using the VLE dedicated to the Postgraduate Diploma programme. The nature and balance of the teaching methods have been chosen to support participants in completing the requirements of each individual course while continuing their normal employment.

Each course runs on a 10 - week cycle (see Appendix 1, Figure 1 for a diagrammatic representation of the course cycle). Each course begins with the release of course materials before the first Monday of the term. All materials will be released electronically via the dedicated VLE and students will only receive hard copies of materials in exceptional circumstances (e.g. in accordance with the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act 2005). This initial course information will include details of: the tutor leading the course; a course reading list; information on the assignments to be completed during the course; details of the course workshop; and a short list of recommended reading to be completed prior to attending the workshop. At this point the VLE will be live and available for students to consult the course team with any initial queries and to access reading and information resources available on-line.

Following release of the course material students should undertake their preliminary reading and prepare any materials needed for the course workshop, which may include evidence of their own learning and development work. The workshop takes place in Week 2 of the course. It is a two-day event in Cambridge at which participants will get a chance to work intensively on the core topics of the course. The process will offer a range of learning activities including: formal lectures and seminars led by the course tutor; input from the course team and/or external guest speakers; self-managed group work; case study discussion and individual or group presentations. Students are expected to attend all sessions and to contribute fully to the workshop activities.

The two weeks following the workshop are allocated for further reading and for analysis of the material presented and discussed during the workshop. This provides participants with an opportunity to reflect on what they have learnt and to begin working towards completion of the course assignments. During this time participants will have access to learning resources, their tutor and to fellow participants through the VLE. In the fifth week, students should produce their first assignment of the course, for submission by the end of Week 5. This will be a formative written assignment of between 1,500 and 2,000 words and should be submitted electronically. The nature of the assignment will depend on the course topics and the decisions of the course tutor and team. This assignment will be double marked and feedback provided to each student individually during the latter half of the course. At the start of Week 6, an interactive on-line exercise begins. A case study relevant to the course content will be made available on the VLE, along with a series of focused questions. Participants will be required to respond to these questions as part of an ongoing discussion, moderated by the course tutor, and to demonstrate their ability to contribute in a professional manner to the collective discussion. The VLE case study exercise will be live for three weeks, to allow all participants to contribute as fully as possible, and for the group to develop the discussion. It is a requirement of the course that all students contribute to this discussion and the tutor will contact participants personally if they have failed to participate satisfactorily.

The VLE case study exercise formally closes at the end of Week 8. Students are then required to produce a second assignment for submission by the end of Week 10. The nature of the assignment will depend on the course topics and the decisions of the course tutor and team, but is likely to be a formal essay analysing one element of the course content and relating this to the case study discussion and/or to the student's own professional experience. This will be a written assignment of between 2,500 and 3,000 words and should be submitted electronically. The assignment will be double marked and feedback provided to each student individually before the inception of the following course. It will constitute 100% of the marks available for the course as a whole.

In addition to Assignments 1 and 2, candidates for the full programme will be expected to produce a 4,000 word commentary assignment summarising their theoretical, practical and professional learning on the course. Students will be directed to begin work on the commentary assignment in week 5 of Course 6. The assignment will be due for submission one month after the close of Course 6 (see above). The commentary will be marked using the criteria established for the course (see *Notes for Panel Tutors...*) and will be double marked.

All candidates for the full programme will normally take the six courses sequentially over a minimum of 24 months, part-time. However, by agreement with the Programme Director, a candidate may take up to 36 months to complete, if it is more suitable to their individual requirements. Any individual course may be taken independently of the Postgraduate Diploma programme and successful completion of a course will offer exemption from that element of the full programme should the candidate subsequently choose to enrol for the Postgraduate Diploma. Students enrolling for the full programme, having already completed at least one course on a stand-alone basis, should then take the remaining courses in their normal sequence.

Constituent Courses

The Postgraduate Diploma in Training, Learning and Development consists of:

(Pre-course: Non-credit orientation Session)

Course 1: Understanding the adult learner

Course 2: Learning in the contemporary organisation: designing and delivering adult, professional learning

Course 3: How people learn: concepts and theories of adult learning

Course 4: Technology-mediated learning: using learning technologies effectively

Course 5: Advanced practical skills for learning professionals

Course 6: Evaluating learning and development

Each course carries 20 credits at FHEQ Level 7 (M)

Non-credit orientation session:

This short orientation session provides an introduction to using the VLE and participants will need to demonstrate that they can access and use the VLE competently before starting the first course. This session is not assessed, but is compulsory for those enrolling for the full Postgraduate Diploma programme or for one of its constituent courses.

Course Descriptions

Course 1: Understanding the adult learner

This course focuses on the particular characteristics and needs of the adult learner in the workplace. The aim will be to provide the knowledge and tools required to understand the diversity of individual learners and learning styles. Emphasis will be placed on methods of both analysing and supporting learners in order to create effective learning communities within and beyond the organisation.

- Carrying out effective needs analysis
- Learner types and learning styles
- Psychometrics, assessment and self-assessment
- Personal Development Plans, diaries and learning logs
- Dealing with diversity - legal and practical issues
- Learning across boundaries of role, sector and culture
- Coaching and mentoring – supporting the learner in the workplace

Course 2: Learning in the contemporary organisation: designing and delivering adult, professional learning

Training, learning and development are crucial for individual and organisational success in today's knowledge-based workplace. This course will enable students to develop a critical understanding of the strategic role that learning and training play in organisational development and will explore the relationship between individual and organisational performance. Students will consider and analyse the complexities associated with the management of training and development in different organisational settings.

- Learning, training and workforce development
- Individual learning and organisational learning - creating the learning organisation
- Making a business case for training, learning and development
- Conceptualising and designing the learning process
- Formal and non-formal learning
- Fit for purpose: working effectively with available resources

Course 3: How people learn: concepts and theories of adult learning

The course presents an overview of learning theory as it applies to adult, professional learners. Students will analyse classical theory and current academic research in the field of adult learning and consider the implications of their application in different contexts and environments. The course offers a comprehensive introduction to essential concepts and models which underpin much of the learning materials covered in subsequent courses.

- Cognition and the acquisition of knowledge and skills: theories of adult learning
- From teaching to learning: transmission or facilitation?
- Learner-centred learning
- Experiential learning and the learning cycle
- Learning communities and non-formal learning
- Supporting the reflective practitioner
- Work-based and problem-based learning
- The significance of the organisational context in supporting learning

Course 4: Technology-mediated learning: using learning technologies effectively

This course reviews the impact of new forms of structuring and delivering learning that has transformed training and development practice in the past decade. The contemporary practitioner needs not just to understand what technologies are available, but to be able to make informed decisions about how to utilise these resources in the most effective (and cost-effective) ways.

- Principles and practice of distance learning
- E-learning – the claims and the critics

- Tutoring and moderating on-line – a new set of skills?
- Pushing the boundaries: simulation; podcasts; second life
- Blended learning and fit-for-purpose design
- Learning technologies and return on investment

Course 5: Advanced practical skills for learning and training professionals

The competent learning, training and development professional needs a portfolio of practical skills to ensure their effective contribution to the full range of learning processes and events. This course provides an opportunity to reinforce and extend those skills through learning from practical examples and from collaboration with peers and specialist practitioners.

- Planning and managing training events
- Addressing functional skills
- Managing the physical learning environment
- Managing the virtual learning environment
- Facilitating the learning process
- Participation styles and group dynamics
- The dynamics of virtual learning communities
- Handling difficult situations

Course 6: Evaluating learning and development

The evaluation of learning and training outcomes is crucial in terms of both individual and organisational development. This course enables students to develop their knowledge of the evaluative systems and benchmarks applied to learning and development in a variety of contexts, and the different purposes for which they are used. Attention will be paid to the evaluation of both personal development (the assessment of learning) and organisational benefit (the impact on the organisation) so that evaluation can be viewed as an integral part of the learning process and its contribution to business performance.

- Theories of educational evaluation
- Evaluation as part of the learning process
- Defining the objectives and criteria of evaluation
- The role of assessment
- Summative vs. formative assessment
- Evaluation for organisational impact
- Cost-benefit analysis of training and development

Programme Requirements

The programme is designed to enhance professionals' understanding of training, learning and development and their skill in the design, delivery and evaluation of courses of study for adults.

Applicants will be considered for admission on the basis of commitment, professional background and academic achievement. This programme will be of interest to graduate and graduate-calibre professionals working in roles within the field of training, learning and development. It will also be of value to those with appropriate academic and professional achievements who are seeking to move into that field, either within an organisation or in a consultancy role. Course content, speakers and examples will be drawn from a range of economic sectors including corporate enterprise, higher education, not-for-profit institutions and private consultancy.

Applicants to the programme will:

- i) Normally be a graduate of a recognised university, or have demonstrated experience in learning and development, or a related area, to a level commensurate with achievement of an undergraduate honours degree;
- ii) Normally be engaged in part- or full-time employment of relevance to the programme contents or be able to demonstrate that they have undertaken study or acquired experience of such relevance;
- iii) Be able to demonstrate proficiency in the English language; students whose first language is not English must be able to satisfy the University's current English Language Competence requirements in the year in which they apply for admission to the course.

Progression

The pass mark for each course is 50%. There will normally be two assignments to complete for each course, one of which is summatively assessed. If a student fails a summative assessment, he or she is entitled to one re-sit per module at or before the subsequent course in the programme. Candidates for the full Postgraduate Diploma programme of study will also have to complete the commentary assignment, one month after Course 6, as terminal evidence of their learning. The pass mark for the commentary assignment is 50% and candidates are permitted one re-sit of this assignment only. Students are required to attend all face-to-face sessions unless there are exceptional circumstances and absence has been agreed with the course tutor. Students will also be required to contribute fully to group work carried out within the VLE and risk failing the course if their contribution does not meet the course tutor's requirements.

All assignments (formative, summative and terminal) will be marked by the course tutor and a second marker (double marked) and feedback provided through the VLE. However, students should be aware that final marks are dependent on approval by the university exam moderation process. For full details of the process for examination, submission, re-sit and appeals, students should consult the Institute's Student Handbook for this programme.

Employability

Students completing the Postgraduate Diploma in Training, Learning & Development will normally already be in employment. The Postgraduate Diploma will enable them to enhance their capacity to critically analyse and examine issues and trends affecting the sector and deliver training, learning and development solutions appropriately. It will represent evidence of advanced knowledge and skills relevant to their role and will demonstrate their commitment to continued professional and personal development.

Successful achievement of the Postgraduate Diploma has been accepted in principle as a qualification route to Fellowship of the Institute of IT Training, a professional body representing training, learning and development professionals. It is expected that the Postgraduate Diploma in Training, Learning & Development will be recognised by other relevant professional bodies and major UK and international organisations as evidence of professional competence in this field of work.

Managing Teaching Quality and Standards

The teaching quality and standards of the course will be monitored by the Programme Advisory Committee and the Subject Moderation Panel, consisting of the University and external moderators and other Faculty and ICE members as agreed by the Education Committee.

Student Support

Advice to students is available both before and after they have registered for a course from the Programme Director and/or the administrative staff assigned to the programme. All students are provided at the start of a course with both the Institute's generic Student Handbook and the Student Handbook for this programme of study.

Administrative staff work closely with the academic team throughout the programme, and are able to provide appropriate levels and types of student support – for instance, support in technical matters, such as using the VLE.