



**Final Consultation Paper**

**Registered Lecturers and Policy on Minimum Qualifications for Teaching Staff on UW  
Collaborative Academic Provision**

**November 2010**

**1 Background**

- 1.1** The policy statement on minimum qualifications of teaching staff has been in operation for a number of years, was formalised through AQSC in 2005 and provided to validation panels to assist in the interpretation of the course validation criteria at that time regarding the expertise of staff. With the expansion in vocational courses, and those delivered in partnership, the following formal policy requirement has been used to approve the match between staff expertise and details of the proposal for validation/approval or in the approval of new staff to become Registered Lecturers on new or existing courses:

‘It is an expectation that staff should normally hold qualifications at least equivalent to the level at which they are teaching. If a department feels that there are exceptional circumstances where this should not apply, they should make a case to waive the requirement to the Director of Quality and Educational Development. Such exceptional circumstances might include significant professional experience in lieu of a formal qualification.’

- 1.2** It has therefore been previously accepted that there could be occasions when teaching staff may not hold the appropriate level of academic qualification but instead have relevant expertise particularly in the areas of vocational courses and work based learning and that the policy could be waived in exceptional circumstances if approved by the Chair of AQSC (now ASQEC).
- 1.3** Additionally, the Registered Lecturer Application Form (2008) clarifies the expectations for approval placing the responsibility on Heads of Institute (or nominee) and by addition of the following criteria:

Registered Lecturers should hold qualifications at or above the level they are teaching and assessing students.

Expected: first degree in a relevant subject

- Preferred: a higher degree in a relevant subject (required if teaching at postgraduate level). Substantial post holders should have or be working towards SEDA qualification
- Discretionary: have demonstrated ability in scholarship or research through relevant published work
- Exception: no degree(s), but a professional qualification and/or substantial relevant (e.g. industrial) experience shown to be equivalent to a first degree. The organisation should submit a special case, which should be attached to the RLS form.

## 2 Discussion

- 2.1** In the revised Course Approval Process, the Head of Institute confirms through the 'signing off' Approval Proforma that staff involved in delivering the award are appropriately qualified and, in the case of provision delivered collaboratively, will be eligible to be given Registered Lecturer status of the University<sup>1</sup>. Similarly, any staff new to delivering an existing award and applying for Registered Lecturer status should be judged against the same criteria. However, there are potential contradictions between the minimum qualifications policy and the criteria within the Registered Lecturer application form.
- 2.2** Guidance in the process for approval of Registered Lecturers (including application forms) and the benefits of Registered Lecturer status are updated on the University Partnership website. The Academic Quality Unit (AQU) manages the process for approval of any registered lecturers subsequent to the course approval. AQU also maintain a database of approved registered lecturers and perform an annual check of the status of approval of all partner staff delivering collaborative academic provision prior to the commencement of the academic year.
- 2.3** The status of Registered Lecturer is given as formal recognition that an individual not employed by the University is adequately qualified and experienced to undertake teaching, assessment and student support activities on behalf of the University as part of a named University programme or other identified area of work. Those applying for Registered Lecturer status are expected to have the support of their own institution or organisation, which should fully understand and accept the implications of this, including where necessary, the responsibility for appropriate staff development.
- 2.4** Additionally, the University is reviewing and developing its staff development framework<sup>2</sup> and the generic person specifications for recruitment of new academic staff to take account of the 'The UK Professional Standards Framework for Teaching and Supporting Learning in Higher Education'.

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<sup>1</sup> Partner staff are required to become 'registered lecturers' prior to delivery of awards.

<sup>2</sup> The Framework aims to provide for all staff a route through which individuals will fulfil their potential and achieve consistently high standards of performance, enabling them to make a significant contribution to the University. This provides a statement of the values, standards, capabilities and behaviours and the expectations that all staff will engage in professional development activities.

- 2.5** In light of these developments, it is proposed that the policy and criteria for approval of registered lecturers should be revised to take account of the following:
- Academic, teaching and professional qualifications at least commensurate with the academic level of the course to be delivered and relevancy of subject, professional and/or vocational discipline;
  - Preparedness to facilitate student learning at an appropriate academic level;
  - A commitment to or evidence of engagement in relevant research and/or scholarly activity;
  - Professional competency and experience;
  - A commitment to continuing professional development.
- 2.6** The original draft amendments and clarification of minimum criteria have been subject to consultation through a number of fora including EPPSC, HE Managers Forum, Link Tutor Forum, SPPGs and direct emails to Heads of Institute and partner HE Managers.
- 2.7** Heads of Institute generally welcomed the clarification of criteria and level of expectations. Most feedback from partners centred around the following:
- The requirements were at risk of being over-burdensome, particularly given the context of delivering HE in FE and lack of funding for research;
  - The expectation that staff delivering HNs or FDs should hold as a minimum L6 qualifications was viewed as problematic, particularly in some newer vocational subjects;
  - The link made between qualifications held and relevance of subject area to that of the award/module(s) being taught;
  - The apparent emphasis given to academic qualifications above vocational or professional qualifications;
  - Evidencing of 'commitment' to research and scholarly activity and the need for a definition of research and scholarly activity;
  - The expectation for a teaching qualification relevant to delivering HE was viewed as conflicting with their general CPD requirement for staff to hold qualifications to teach in FE
- 2.8** As a result of feedback from the consultation above, amendments have been made to the proposed criteria and are presented below for final consultation.
- 2.9** It is proposed that the approval of staff, either in the partner course approval process or as new Registered Lecturers should be evaluated according to the following criteria taking into account the level of teaching and the proportion of the individual's time spent on University activities.
- 3 Policy Statement on the Minimum Criteria for Approval of Registered Lecturers to Deliver University of Worcester Awards:**
- 3.1** Staff should normally be qualified to at least level 6 (typically Honours degree);

- 3.2** If teaching at Level 7, staff should normally be qualified to at least Level 7 (typically Masters) or above.
- 3.3** The academic or professional qualification/s held by the staff member should normally be in a discipline relevant to the award/module(s) being taught;
- 3.4** Staff should hold a teaching qualification (or undertake a programme of study<sup>3</sup>) relevant to delivering Higher Education;
- 3.5** Staff should demonstrate engagement with relevant research and/or scholarly activity;
- 3.6** Staff should demonstrate appropriate and on-going evidence of continuing professional development to maintain their knowledge, standards, capabilities and behaviours at the appropriate levels for higher education. Where appropriate professional practice or industrial placement may also have to be undertaken;
- 3.7** Where a staff member does not have the level of qualification(s) identified in paragraphs 3.1 to 3.3 above but can demonstrate significant and appropriate industrial and/or professional experience directly relevant to the course, consideration should be given to their intended role within the course team, the balance of qualifications and experience held by the team and the contribution their role would make to the delivery of theoretical and vocational elements of the award.
- 3.8** In exceptional circumstances, the Head of Institute may approve a member of staff as a Registered Lecturer on the basis of significant and relevant industrial/professional experience. There may be conditions on this approval, for example, that an appropriate programme of staff development and/or study leading to a qualification at the specified level is undertaken.

#### **4 Process for Approval of Registered Lecturers**

- 4.1** Partner staff are required to become Registered Lecturers prior to delivery of awards.
- 4.2** This process is managed by the University Academic Quality Unit (AQU) who maintain a database of approved Registered Lecturers and perform an annual check of the status of approval of all partner staff delivering collaborative academic provision at the commencement of the academic year.
- 4.3** For new courses, partner staff are required to provide a Curriculum Vitae during the course approval process for approval by the Head of Institute (or nominee).
- 4.4** Members of staff joining a course team subsequent to course approval are required to apply for Registered Lecturer status prior to their involvement in course delivery through completion of the Registered Lecturer Application Form.

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<sup>3</sup> For Example, a module from the Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education

- 4.5** On completion of the application form, this will be forwarded electronically to the relevant partner organisation HE Manager (or equivalent) for their approval prior to submission electronically to the relevant Head of Institute (or nominee) for approval on behalf of the University of Worcester (Institute contact details at the University of Worcester are provided on the application form).
- 4.6** Following approval, the Head of Institute (or nominee) will forward the application form electronically to the Quality Officer (Collaborative) in the Academic Quality Unit
- 4.7** Upon receipt of the approved application form, the Quality Officer (Collaborative) will obtain a staff number from Personnel and will confirm this to the Registered Lecturer by email. The Registered Lecturer will be sent information regarding accessing the University of Worcester electronic resources and links to the forms they will need to complete in order for the UW Information and Learning Services to provide them with access to UW resources.
- 4.8** Guidance in the process for approval of Registered Lecturers (including application forms) and the benefits of Registered Lecturer status are provided on the University Partnership website.