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Latest on IfL, QTLS and CPD

Members will know that following our successful campaign against compulsory membership fees for the Institute for Learning (IfL), the government set up an independent review of professionalism in FE chaired by Lord Lingfield. This review recommended the ending of compulsory IfL membership and CPD requirements by revoking the relevant statutory regulations. In addition it said that individuals should be able to claim a refund on fees.

There was then formal consultation on the amending of the regulations and the following arrangements will now be **effective from 30 September 2012**. (We anticipate that FE staff will receive communication from BIS over the next two weeks.).

Registration with IfL

It will no longer be a statutory requirement for teaching staff to register with IfL. It will be a matter of voluntary choice for individuals if they wish to join IfL or continue their membership. As recommended by the Lingfield report, those who have already paid a subscription for the full year, but do not wish now to continue their membership, will be able to apply to IfL for a refund for the period from 1 October 2012. (More details on this will be available later)

There will be no statutory requirement for teaching staff to record CPD with IfL or for individuals to undertake a minimum of 30 hours of CPD per year.

In the future the expectation is that individual employers will develop policies following consultation with staff and recognised trade unions.

The government is also promoting the development of a Further Education Guild (see below) which once established is likely to set standards for CPD and other staff development.

Qualifications

Statutory requirements to obtain QTLS are removed with effect from 30 September 2012. But the regulatory requirement for FE teachers employed in colleges to be appropriately qualified remains in place pending the proposed FE Guild development, and the completion of the review of qualifications currently being undertaken by LSIS.

Although no longer a statutory requirement, IfL will continue for the present to maintain arrangements to offer the award of QTLS. Teachers who wish to continue working towards the award should follow current IfL advice and guidance. The Professional Formation process has to be followed but IfL membership is no longer required. QTLS will continue to be recognised as equivalent with QTS for teaching in maintained schools.

The regulatory changes do not affect the current arrangements for financial support for Initial Teacher Training in 2012-13

Future Arrangements for Workforce Training and Development

These are likely to focus on the Governments plans to set up an FE Guild. Although not clearly defined its main functions are to include:

- Acting as an overarching body with responsibility for professionalism and vocational education across the sector;
- Offering both institutional and organisational membership on a voluntary basis;
- Enhancing the reputation and status of the sector and being 'a custodian of excellence'; and
- Being an 'employer-led' partnership which draws in employee representative organisations and sector bodies concerned with workforce standards

Its main purposes would be

- To raise standards of professionalism and quality improvement in the FE and Skills sector.
- As a mechanism for the sector to take forward the outcomes of the Lingfield Review when it reports in September and Frank McLoughlin's Commission on Adult Vocational Teaching and Learning (CAVTL).
- An alternative approach for 'sector employers with employees' to take ownership of and put in place a shared aspiration to promote the highest standards of teaching and learning and CPD in FE and Skills.
- An opportunity for the sector to take collective responsibility for the training and development needs of the sector. UCU and other trade unions, together with most of the key sector organisations have given initial support to a bid led by the AOC for funds to develop the guild We have taken the view that this offers the best opportunity to retain sector wide standards following deregulation and the maximum involvement and ability of trade unions to promote practitioners interests.

More information on all of the above will follow as the arrangements develop.

Pay Offer

Make sure you have your say!

Members are reminded to attend branch meetings being held in the next couple of

weeks to discuss whether the 0.7% pay offer is accepted or rejected and if we should be balloting for strike action. The National FE committee is recommending that we reject and take action but will be deciding on the next steps on the basis of the consultation with branches. For further information <http://www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=1741>

Graded observations on the way out?

Following on from news that The Manchester College is scrapping the use of graded observations agreement ending a dispute has now been reached at the College of North West London to also stop the use of grades within their lesson observation scheme. Momentum appears to be growing against the use of graded observations and toward genuinely supportive and developmental lesson observation schemes with Bournemouth and Poole College also scrapping grades in their recently revised scheme.

UCU to commission research into lesson observations

UCU is commissioning a piece of research to investigate the role of lesson observation in the Further Education (FE) sector. The research will explore and evaluate current models of lesson observation and their perceived purposes and effects on FE lecturers' professional practice and development and seek to identify best practice. The findings of this research together with other activity around UCU's lesson observations campaigning are likely to be presented in a seminar later in the 2012/13 year.

Win at City College Brighton and Hove

UCU City College Brighton and Hove branch have succeeded in negotiation significant improvements to their observation scheme including:

- removal of Grade 3 link to unsatisfactory performance procedures
- observation windows announced at start of the year
- minimum 3 days notice of specific observation
- temporary reductions in teaching loads for staff to undertaking training and support following a grade 4