

MEd IN TEACHING AND LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Department of Educational Studies
and
Learning and Teaching Services (LeTS)

2010

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Teaching Team: Tim Herrick
Alan Skelton

Why is the University of Sheffield putting on this course?

The University of Sheffield was one of the first institutions to respond to growing concerns about the quality of higher education teaching in the 1990s. In January 1992 it launched the MEd for University Lecturers course to provide professional development for lecturers which would be recognised by the award of a higher degree in education. The main aim of this course was to develop a growing network of lecturers interested in innovation and change in university teaching.

The course is now well established and has a national and international reputation. It is accredited by the Higher Education Academy which is developing knowledge, practice and policy related to all aspects of the student experience in higher education. The next group of participants will begin the course in September 2010. Participants will have an opportunity to explore their work in depth, within a stimulating interdisciplinary environment.

The name of the course was changed in 2007 to the 'MEd in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education'. This reflects a growing recognition that a wide range of professionals are involved in supporting learning in universities not simply 'lecturers'.

What kind of course is it?

The course is *research-led*: it is based upon the assumption that university lecturers' teaching and their students' learning are proper subjects for research. Tutors are also learners alongside students, learning from them, with them, and from our own practice of teaching. The course adopts a distinctive *learning process* which involves lecturers coming together to develop their practice of teaching through sustained reflection within a supportive community of peers. It is out of this reflection upon practice that theory

emerges and innovative approaches to teaching can be explored. One of the benefits of a mixed group of lecturers from different disciplines is that they bring different ideas and experiences to the course. It is through the exchange of these ideas and experiences - a process which can be called '*critical inter-disciplinarity*' - that people's understandings develop and change over time. The detailed contents of the course emerge from negotiation with participants, who are expected to take an active part and contribute from their own experience of teaching and learning.

The course is modular and part-time. The taught element consists of four modules. Each involves approximately 25 hours of contact time, plus supervision and independent study. Meetings take place mainly on Wednesday afternoons (see *When will the course take place?* for further details).

Following the four taught modules there is a research dissertation, to be completed in no less than two academic terms. The dissertation involves some development of your teaching. Individual support and supervision for this is provided by staff of the Department of Educational Studies.

Participants may opt to complete to Certificate, Diploma or Master's level. Course modules may be taken over a period of time but it is hoped that participants will wish to complete to Certificate or Diploma level as a cohort in order to maximise peer-group support.

What does it aim to achieve?

The course aims to fulfil the following purposes through close examination of our work as university staff:

- (i) ***Making practice public***: practitioners observing their own practice, writing about it, interpreting and sharing.
- (ii) ***Understanding learners***: finding out how students perceive their learning experience and understand the subject matter.
- (iii) ***Values***: discerning and critiquing the values which underlie the practice of teaching and the subject matter.
- (iv) ***Developing a community***: working together in ways which facilitate support for on-going critique of practice and developing and testing new ideas for teaching.
- (v) ***The relationship between teaching and research***: exploring ways in which teaching and research can support each other.
- (vi) ***Students as evaluators of their own learning***: developing strategies for student evaluation and considering the implications for lecturers, assessments and views of students as learners.

Who can take part?

Course participants are required to hold a first degree in any discipline, or to have equivalent professional experience. They also have to be involved directly, or to have some responsibility for, some kind of university teaching and/or support of learning, which will provide the basis for their investigations on the course. They should also have held a full-time or part-time university post for at least one academic term prior to the commencement of the course.

It is hoped that about 12 participants will take part in the course starting in September 2010. We expect participants to come from a range of different disciplines. We particularly welcome those with considerable experience of university teaching as well as those who are relatively new to the profession, and those who have a strong research interest as well as those whose interests mainly lie in teaching.

When will the course take place?

Each module will run during an academic term (e.g. Module 1: September-December 2010) and will involve two full days (introduction/conclusion) and five Wednesday afternoon sessions. Provisional dates for the 2010 session are:

**MEd in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (2010 starters)
Provisional Dates**

Module 1 (September-December 2010)		Module 2 (January-April 2011)	
Wednesday 22 September	9.30am-4.30pm	Wednesday 12 January	9.30am-4.30pm
Wednesday 6 October	2.00pm-4.30pm	Wednesday 26 January	2.00pm-4.30pm
Wednesday 20 October	2.00pm-4.30pm	Wednesday 9 February	2.00pm-4.30pm
Wednesday 3 November	2.00pm-4.30pm	Wednesday 23 February	2.00pm-4.30pm
Wednesday 17 November	2.00pm-4.30pm	Wednesday 9 March	2.00pm-4.30pm
Wednesday 1 December	2.00pm-4.30pm	Wednesday 23 March	2.00pm-4.30pm
Wednesday 15 December	9.30am-4.30pm	Wednesday 6 April	9.30am-4.30pm

Module 3 (April-July 2011)		Module 4 (September-December 2011)	
Wednesday 27 April	9.30am-4.30pm	Wednesday 14 September	9.30am-4.30pm
Wednesday 11 May	2.00pm-4.30pm	Wednesday 28 September	2.00pm-4.30pm
Wednesday 25 May	2.00pm-4.30pm	Wednesday 12 October	2.00pm-4.30pm
Wednesday 8 June	2.00pm-4.30pm	Wednesday 26 October	2.00pm-4.30pm
Wednesday 22 June	2.00pm-4.30pm	Wednesday 9 November	2.00pm-4.30pm

Wednesday 6 July	2.00pm-4.30pm	Wednesday 23 November	2.00pm-4.30pm
Wednesday 13 July	9.30am-4.30pm	Wednesday 7 December	9.30am-4.30pm

Dissertation study (minimum two academic terms) will commence from January 2012.

What will the modules be about?

The specific focus of the taught modules varies according to the particular needs of the participants who play a major role in negotiating this content within the general aims outlined above.

In the first instance the following titles will be offered and resources will be organised around these themes:

i) Module 1 - Teaching, Learning and the Changing Nature of Higher Education

This module considers the teaching and learning practices with which we are familiar. It seeks to help people understand and develop these practices, whilst recognising that they are informed by broader contemporary changes in higher education and society. In order to develop our thinking and practice, we draw upon our experience of learning together as a group, our work with students, and the literature on teaching and learning in higher education. Within this module the following themes are likely to be pursued:

- * Working and learning in/as a group
- * Different approaches to teaching and learning
- * Institutional, social and political contexts of teaching and learning
- * The purpose of higher education
- * Contemporary changes in higher education

ii) Module 2 - Assessing Learning

Here we consider the formal and informal aspects of assessing students' work and also the assessment of our own teaching and learning. Themes to be covered are likely to include:

- * Assessment and evaluation in different contexts
- * Objectivity and fairness in assessment
- * New and innovative approaches to assessment

- * Relationships between teaching and assessment
- * Sharing the different ways we assess
- * Assessing our teaching

iii) Module 3 - Curriculum in Higher Education

This module focuses on issues relating to curriculum design and how this relates to our values concerning learning, students, knowledge and society.

Themes which may be considered are:

- * Relationships between the curriculum and the needs of society
- * Values underlying the curriculum
- * Appropriateness of pre-specified objectives
- * Negotiation and ownership of the curriculum
- * Relationships between content and process

iv) Module 4 – Technologies for learning and teaching

This module will provide a space for critical investigation of the roles and functions of learning technologies in higher education. Themes likely to be explored include:

- * The place of learning technology in society
 - * Their impact on relations within the classroom
- * How they are understood and used in different disciplinary contexts
- * Relations between gender and learning technologies
- * If they are transforming what we understand by learning and teaching

How will the work be assessed?

During each of the four modules of the Diploma element of the course participants build up a portfolio of work which is assessed on a pass/fail basis. Guidance is given concerning the construction of the portfolio. It may contain a diary/journal element, examples of teaching and analysis, samples of students' evaluations, comments upon readings, and other reflective and/or creative writings. Portfolios are normally submitted for assessment at the beginning of the term following the one in which the module was

undertaken. While assessment may be negotiated, it is the final responsibility of the course tutors.

Dissertations are examined by the supervising tutor. They are subject to approval by the Board of Examiners.

What awards can be gained from the course?

The course is a 180-credit modular course. The successful completion of each module leads to the award of 30 credits; a successful dissertation is awarded 60 credits. Named awards are offered as follows:

PG Certificate: 60 credits. Awarded for the equivalent of 2 terms part-time study on two 30-credit modules.

PG Diploma: 120 credits. Awarded for the equivalent of 4 terms part-time study on four 30-credit modules.

MEd: 180 credits. Awarded for the equivalent of 6 terms part-time study on four 30-credit modules plus one 60-credit dissertation.

On completing 60 credits a participant may either gain a Certificate or proceed to the Diploma, and on completing 120 credits may either gain a Diploma or proceed to the Masters or our EdD programme. Awards may not be accumulated. On completion of the Diploma, participants are able to become members of the HEA.

Through the Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT) and Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) systems, it may be possible for course applicants to receive some exemption from coursework assessment. This may be of particular interest to people who have taken other courses on teaching and learning or academic practice in the recent past and who wish to continue their studies. A maximum of 60 credits may be exempted through the CAT/APL route.

Fees

Employees of Sheffield University will normally have their fees met by the University and their Department (on a 50/50 basis). For others, the fee is approximately £565 per 30 credit module.

What do I do if I want to take part?

Fill in the attached application form and return it to Alan Skelton at the Department of Educational Studies, 388 Glossop Road, Sheffield S10 2JA, **as soon as possible** and

by 31 August 2010 at the latest (people will be offered places on a first come first serve basis). You will then be invited to an interview in order to ensure that this is the right course to meet your needs.

If you would like to discuss the course further, before making an application, please contact Dr Alan Skelton on 0114 222 8120, e-mail a.m.skelton@sheffield.ac.uk or Dr Tim Herrick on 0114 2227004, email t.herrick@shef.ac.uk.

If you are unsuccessful in this application you will have first option for a place on the next course.

**M.Ed Teaching and Learning
in Higher Education
APPLICATION FORM 2010**

Name: _____ Title: _____
Sex: _____ Date of birth: _____ Nationality: _____ -

Department/address: _____

Appointment held: _____ Full-time/Part-time: _____

Extension number/e-mail: ☎ _____
Email: _____

Date of appointment at your institution: _____

Academic qualifications held: _____

Home address: _____
_____ Home telephone number: _____

Do you have any physical or other disabilities? _____

Initially, do you intend to complete the course up to:

Certificate Diploma Masters

Please indicate in a sentence or two why you would like to take part in this course.

For the Head of Department: I understand that this course will be valuable to the department, and I fully support this application. The Department agrees to contribute 50% of the funding for the course.

Head of Department's signature:

Please return this form to Alan Skelton, Department of Educational Studies,
388 Glossop Road, Sheffield S10 2JA
as soon as possible and no later than 31 August 2010.