

Evaluation of the Second Round of the Tests and Trials of the New Initial Teaching Qualifications

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report presents the results of the York Consulting LLP (YCL) evaluation of the second round of the tests and trials of the new initial teacher qualifications for the lifelong learning sector commissioned by Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK). These qualifications are the award Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector (PTLLS) award and the Certificate in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (CTLLS). These are two qualifications out of three generic teaching qualifications developed for the Teacher Qualifications Framework (TQF), leading towards either an Associate or Full teacher status. PTLLS is a 6-credit introductory award for everyone teaching in the sector, while CTLLS is a 24-credit qualification for those in the Associate Teacher role.
2. This executive summary condenses the main findings under those areas that are working well, those that need most attention, and those that can be improved further. The evidence for the statements made in the executive summary can be found in the main body of the report, as well as a thorough background to initial teacher training developments in the sector.

Aims and Objectives

3. The aim of our work is to inform LLUK on those areas that in our opinion, based on robust evaluation evidence, are working well in the tests and trials, those areas that need special consideration, and those that could be improved even further. This includes highlighting best practice and suggesting recommendations for improvement.
4. The objectives of the evaluation included an analysis of:
 - delivery modes (when, where and how courses are delivered);
 - initial assessment;
 - learner support including mentoring;
 - assessment (both formative and summative);
 - size (the guided learning hours (GLH) and the credits allocated);

- level;
- content (including an explanation of the distinction between the units of assessment and the qualifications);
- contextualisation (how the qualifications have been adapted to different parts of the sectors);
- preparedness (what the qualifications prepare learners to do);
- progression (within the qualifications, with other and previous qualifications, and in a wider career sense); and
- quality assurance.

Methodology

5. This is a short qualitative study focused on key aspects of the new qualifications as described in the aims above. The methodology, as agreed with the client, comprised:

- **telephone interviews:** ten interviews with stakeholders including Awarding Institutions, providers and policy stakeholders. Some of these consultations were followed up in order to capture changes in perceptions and developments over a two-to-three month period;
- **case study visits:** visits to nine providers consisting of interviews with managers, tutors and learners (where available) chosen so as to ensure an appropriate constituency, geographical and awarding institution spread where possible¹;
- **profiling information:** quantitative data gathered from Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and Awarding Body (AB) centres on basic learner characteristics such as age, gender, and previous qualifications. A total of nine proformas were received, representing 174 learners (128 in PTLLS and 46 in CTLLS);
- **desk research:** review of policy documents including programme descriptions, and programme evaluations; and
- **reporting.**

¹ We have gathered profiling information for learners from all English regions (see Appendix E).

6. The evaluation faced some key limitations. These included delays in funding, accreditation and endorsement which made sampling difficult as well as the collection of profiling information. As a result, the information collected is heavily biased towards the PTLLS award. Therefore, the findings below need to be interpreted with circumspection.

What is working well?

Appropriateness and Preparedness

7. The qualifications are fit for purpose for teachers, tutors and trainers in the lifelong learning sector and can address the varied needs of the sector. The qualifications were found to be appropriate for different age groups, employment sectors and those with a varied background with regards to previous experience/qualification attainment. They prepare learners in the sample to fulfil their varied teaching roles.

Level

8. The levels of the qualifications are generally regarded as appropriate by stakeholders even for those with previous experience and/or teaching qualifications. This satisfaction is despite learners' general lack of awareness of the existence of different levels. However, some stakeholders doubt the validity of having two levels for PTLLS. When asked, AB centres and other stakeholders expressed their lack of clarity as to why two levels are needed, except for HEI purposes. Therefore, most providers and stakeholders would welcome clarification of the need for two levels and, more importantly, clarification on the implications for progression.

Delivery

9. Delivery strategies are varied and can accommodate the needs of learners and employers. Delivery patterns and modes are varied. This is partly due to Awarding Institutions giving centres the flexibility to tailor delivery. Teaching and learning methods are also mixed to address different learning styles. We have therefore found significant good practice in this area across the sector.

Contextualisation

10. Where sought, contextualisation has been positively achieved and in this way the qualifications have addressed the needs of specific constituencies within the sector. It appears to be easier to contextualise the PTLLS award when there are existing specialist qualifications as with the police force or the CIPD. The only concern around contextualisation is that it can considerably increase the size of the delivery programme for the PTLLS award.

What Needs Most Attention

Size

11. It must be emphasised that technically LLUK develops units of assessment with learning outcomes and assessment criteria, while centres design their own programmes/courses based on AB handbooks and other guidance.
12. In order to cover all of the assessment criteria, programmes tend to be too large for the number of GLHs and credits allocated. Often providers see PTLLS as too large for the hours allocated because they are unclear about the scope and depth required, and about its purpose.
13. For example, the assessment criterion around legislation reads *“identify key aspects of relevant current legislative requirements and codes of practice within a specific context”*. Without further guidance and clarification –for example from AB handbooks- it is not clear to providers in what level of detail to cover this area. Therefore some providers design lengthy programmes to cover this criterion (and others), which results in programmes that are too long for the hours stipulated.
14. Managing the balance (within the number of credits allocated) between guided learning hours and self-study hours varies across providers. In this respect, managing the microteaching within the given GLH is often seen as a challenge in PTLLS.

Initial Assessment

15. The use of initial assessment is inconsistent. LLUK provides guidance that suggests that initial assessment takes place within PTLLS, and it is an integral part of the course for some providers, but others do not carry out initial assessment at all or know how it could benefit learners.

Course Information

16. Learner expectations are varied and many are unclear as to what expect from their courses. This is directly linked to the poor level of information available from AIs/providers prior to courses starting, which can be partly attributed to the tests and trials nature of the programmes so far and the short timescales of their development.

Learner Support

17. We have defined learner support as those activities outside strictly teaching that can aid achievement and progression, such as information, advice and guidance,

mentoring, and other institutional support such as IT facilities, skills for life support, and access to library services. Variations in learner support result in differences in the quality of the learner experience. On the positive side, provider support through tutorials and staff time is generally sufficient and beneficial. However, support resources also vary considerably across providers.

18. Peer support is emerging as important for learner teachers, as they develop their own support networks. Employer support needs to be investigated further because of the importance of employers in recruiting, supporting and employing learners. Some providers, especially in work-based learning (WBL), proactively and positively engage with employers to promote support in the workplace, increase their marketing activities and provide information at the local level. Centres for Excellence in Teacher Training will have the potential to complement provider, employer and peer support effectively.

Mentoring

19. Despite being generally regarded as good practice in the sector, mentoring support for teacher learners is inconsistent, often non-existent or inadequate. Mentoring culture is not always strong and there are weaknesses about arranging and providing mentoring. This weakness is caused by time constraints (especially for PTLLS) and a shortage of guidance highlighting the importance of such support. Providers offer mentoring in different ways, with stakeholders generally regarding it more relevant and practicable for CTLLS and DTLLS than for PTLLS because of the length of the qualification.

Progression

20. Learners, employers and providers see the value of the qualifications belonging to a wider teacher qualifications framework which aids progression. However, progression routes are often unclear and there is confusion about who needs what qualification and when. This is based on limited evidence that indicates that learners are often not aware of different levels, while AB centres at the moment are offering mainly the level 3 PTLLS and generally think that level 4 PTLLS has been created to accommodate HEIs. However, this does not rule out the possibility of more AB centres offering level 4 PTLLS if and when demand for it increases in the future.
21. There is a need to distinguish more clearly how Associate and Full teacher roles are defined. Learners, providers and employers are not always clear about the requirements from September 2007 despite there now being guidance documents and regulations available. Moreover, there is evidence of very limited awareness and understanding of accreditation of prior learning routes. Also, learners are not always aware of or clear about the options they have between choosing AB or higher education provision.

What Could Be Improved Even Further

Content

22. We have found the content of the units written by LLUK to be adequate with respect to stakeholders' expectations. The key consideration for providers of PTLLS is how to cover the content, and what depth to go into. In this respect, consultees disagree on whether or not to include certain areas that they do not consider are directly linked to teaching (such as legislative requirements e.g. safeguarding adults/protection etc).
23. Again, it must be emphasised that LLUK develops the assessment criteria for the units of assessment that form the qualifications and it does not develop programmes or courses. These are developed by the awarding institutions with guidance from the awarding bodies. LLUK does specify the GLH and the amount of microteaching and teaching practice required within the qualifications.
24. Providers and learners almost unanimously regard microteaching as the most valuable part of PTLLS. The key core area that stakeholders would unanimously like to see included in PTLLS and CTLLS is behaviour/learner management. However, this could be covered by the use of optional units in such areas.

Assessment

25. The assessment strategies built around the units of assessment are regarded as positive in that they measure achievement efficiently and respond to the needs of different learners in different sectors. Assessment strategies are varied and have improved throughout the tests and trials, moving away from over-assessment.

Quality Assurance

26. All providers consulted have quality assurance mechanisms in place and briefly mentioned the role of internal moderators and external verifiers. Only one of the nine providers visited actually discussed the recent visit by the external verifier. They are clearly used to applying quality assurance processes because of previous experience of delivering teacher training qualifications delivered. However, in order to reinforce quality assurance, more information is needed for new providers and on external verification. Please note that this evaluation did not constitute an inspection and quality assurance was only briefly discussed with providers.

Recommendations

27. Based on the evidence presented throughout this report, this is a brief summary of our key recommendations:
- clarify the depth of content required in the delivery of the PTLLS award in order to address issues about the size of PTLLS and the inclusion of issues not considered as directly linked to teaching – this could be achieved through the publication of good practice;
 - within the credit value of the qualifications, shift the balance towards GLH, and microteaching;
 - include learner behaviour management as a core component of PTLLS;
 - clarify the minimum requirements for learner support, mentoring and initial assessment – this could be achieved through further investigation of good practice and linking with CETTs;
 - ensure that information on entry requirements and progression routes is disseminated, and explore further the need for two levels of PTLLS and CTLLS;
 - take into account the need for provider and employer support for teacher trainers in order to improve their capacity to plan, deliver and evaluate the qualifications, and their ability to support their own learners; and
 - undertake further research on areas such as the Associate and Full teacher roles, external verifier and internal moderator reports, and employer involvement.
28. When taking forward the points above, we recommend highlighting the need for variation in delivery that already exists from Awarding Institutions since flexibility is highly valued. Providing guidance should not equal prescription, since uniformity of delivery is not necessarily desirable.
29. It is important to emphasise that not all of the recommendations above can be taken forward by LLUK and there is scope for other stakeholders such as SVUK, QCA, ABs and HEIs to contribute as appropriate.