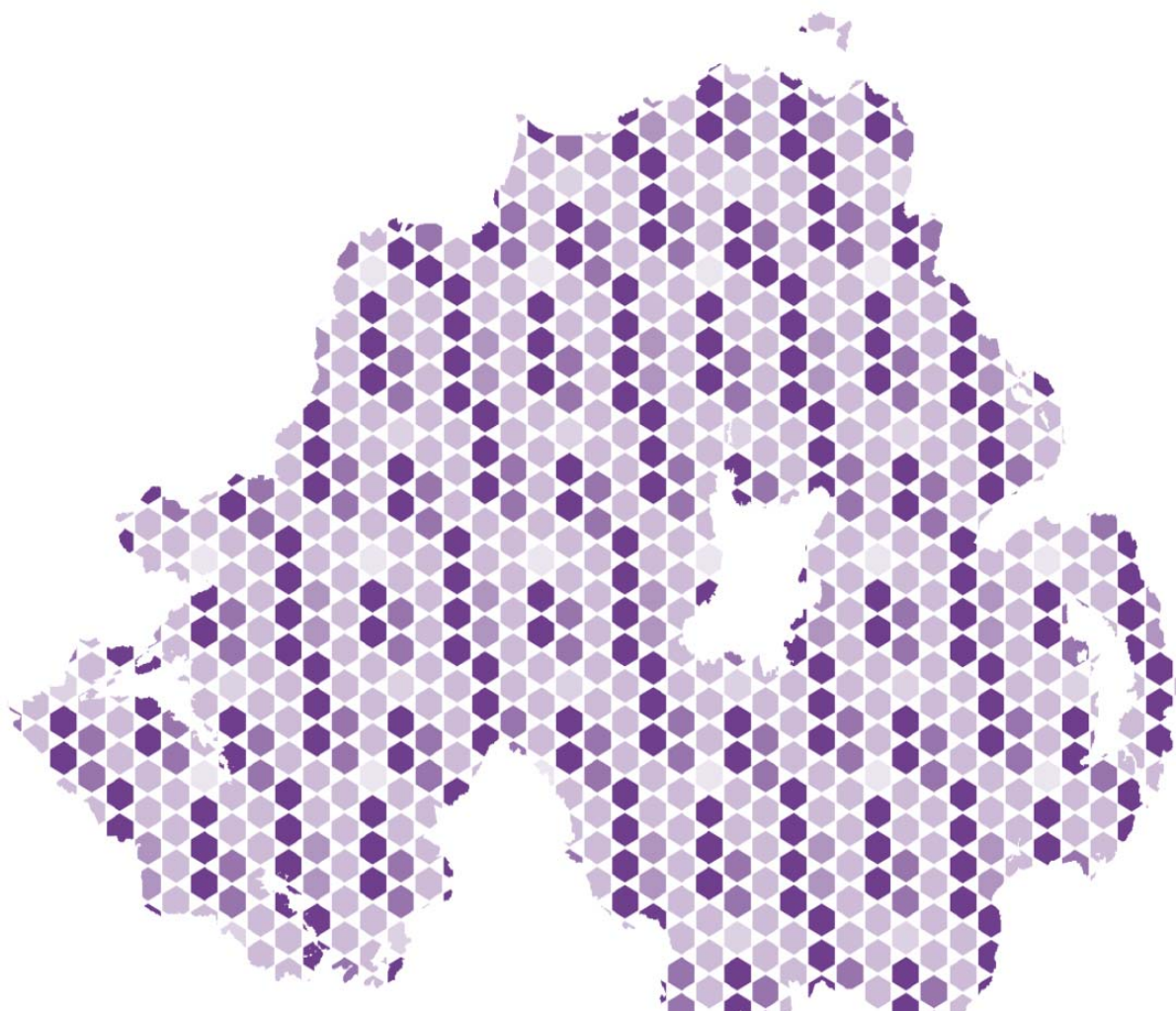


TEACHER/HIGHER EDUCATION INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Pilot Certificate in Teaching
Programme School of
Education University of Ulster,
Jordanstown
Report of an Inspection
in May-November 2009

eti

*The Education and Training Inspectorate -
Promoting Improvement*

Providing Inspection Services for

Department of Education
Department for Employment and Learning
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE

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A number of quantitative terms are used in the report. In percentages, the terms correspond as follows:

- More than 90% - almost/nearly all
- 75%-90% - most
- 50%-74% - a majority
- 30%-49% - a significant minority
- 10%-29% - a minority
- Less than 10% - very few/a small minority

All the statistics in this report have been supplied and verified by the University of Ulster.

Performance Levels

The Education and Training Inspectorate use the following performance levels in reports:

Performance Level	Descriptor
Outstanding	Outstanding characterised by excellence
Very Good	Consistently good; major strengths
Good	Important strengths in most of the provision. Areas for improvement which organisation has the capacity to address
Satisfactory	Overall sound/satisfactory but with areas for improvement in important areas which need to be addressed
Inadequate	A few strengths; significant areas for improvement which require prompt action
Unsatisfactory	Poor; major shortcomings which require urgent action

PART ONE: SUMMARY

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Certificate in Teaching is a pilot programme, funded by the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) and offered on a one year part-time basis to tutors from the work-based learning sector. The overall aim of the course is to prepare and support tutors in their teaching, and to raise the quality of practice in the work-based learning sector in terms of curriculum planning, teaching and training strategies, and the management of learning.

1.2 The Certificate in Teaching programme has been developed by the School of Education at the University of Ulster in conjunction with the Business School and the University Department of Access and Distributed Learning. It forms part of a suite of teacher education qualifications for teachers in colleges of further education and training organisations.

1.3 Those enrolled in the pilot programme are all employed tutors¹, on a full-time capacity, in a training organisation. They come from a wide range of professional and technical backgrounds and there is a significant variation in their teaching experience. On entry to the programme, student tutors are required to hold at least a level 3 vocational qualification. In addition, participants are required to hold a General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), or equivalent, in both English and mathematics.

1.4 The student tutors are taught through formal teaching sessions, which are usually three hours weekly for two semesters. In addition, they are expected to spend approximately three hours weekly on independent study. The student tutors receive additional support from the university teaching team through a self-referral booking system.

2. THE EVALUATION

2.1 The Education and Training Inspectorate (the Inspectorate) completed an evaluation of the Certificate in Teaching Programme between May and November 2009. The evaluation focused, in particular, on:

- the appropriateness of the course organisation, structure and content to meet the training needs of the student tutors;
- the impact of the outcomes of the programme on the student tutors' practice, including how the programme equips them to reflect critically, to self-assess and to self-improve; and
- the extent to which the programme helps student tutors to identify their future continuing professional development needs, and the extent to which it develops a range of lifelong learning skills which equips them for ongoing professional development.

¹ For the remainder of the report, the tutors will be referred to as student tutors.

2.2 During the period of the evaluation, inspectors held discussions with the university teaching team, reviewed course documentation and scrutinised a sample of the student tutors' assignments. Inspectors made inspection visits to all of the training organisations involved in the pilot. During the visits the inspectors made observations of the student tutors' teaching, evaluated relevant documentation, including samples of work, and held discussions with the student tutors and managers of the training organisations.

3. SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

3.1 The strengths include the:

- very good leadership and management of the programme;
- very good quality and design of the programme which provides appropriate support for the student tutors;
- constructive, detailed, evaluative feedback, and the marking for improvement, provided by the university team, which promotes and supports improvements in the student tutors' practice;
- high levels of motivation and commitment of the student tutors and the good retention rate of 86%;
- enhanced professionalism of the student tutors, characterised by their willingness to undertake innovative approaches to teaching and learning; and
- increased professional confidence of the student tutors, demonstrated by their wider understanding of educational language, theory and practice, and the clear evidence of improvements in their own practice.

3.2 The main areas for improvement include the:

- need to strengthen the procedures for induction and initial assessment of the student tutors;
- more effective use of information learning technology (ILT) in course delivery; and
- strengthening of the context of the programme to ensure that it meets more effectively the particular challenges provided by the work-based learning sector.

PART TWO: MAIN REPORT

4. COURSE ORGANISATION, STRUCTURE AND CONTENT

4.1 The programme is very well led and managed. It is well planned to reflect the role of the work-based learning sector in addressing the needs of the economy. The communication between the university team, the training organisation managers, and the student tutors is managed effectively. Almost all of the training organisation managers report that they are well informed about the programme and about their student tutors' progress within it.

4.2 Almost all of the student tutors report that the course content has developed their professional knowledge and understanding of training and learning, and assessment for learning. Student tutors report that the programme contributes positively to the development and support of good and innovative practice in the workplace.

4.3 The programme has been reviewed appropriately by the university, in the light of feedback provided by the student tutors. This review has resulted in the inclusion of academic writing support sessions, effective one-to-one support, and detailed feedback to students on their progress. This guidance is valued highly by all of the student tutors.

4.4 The initial assessment of the learning needs of the student tutors are identified appropriately during their induction programme. However, the assessment of their information and communication technology (ICT) capability is limited.

4.5 There has been an increased focus on the introduction and embedding of technology enhanced learning to help improve the student tutors' practice. Whilst a good start has been made to producing and posting more innovative resources on the university's virtual learning environment, opportunities remain to make more effective use of the virtual learning environment and other technologies to support further course delivery.

4.6 With the exception of ICT, the programme includes an appropriate emphasis on improving the essential skills of the student tutors. It has also improved their understanding of the essential skills needs of the learners with whom they work. There is also firm evidence that the focus on essential skills has improved curriculum planning between the student tutors on the programme and their essential skills colleagues in the training organisations.

4.7 The quality of the provision for learning provided by the university is very good. The sessions observed were carefully planned to meet the needs of the student tutors, and the ethos in the sessions was very supportive.

4.8 The university has employed, to good effect, guest speakers to deliver sessions on critical aspects of practice relevant to the work-based learning sector, including a focus on behaviour and classroom management, special educational needs and technology enhanced learning. The range of guest speakers, however, needs to be extended to include experienced managers and practitioners from the work-based learning sector.

4.9 For a significant minority of training organisations, the half-day release model of delivery is problematic because of its impact on timetabling within the organisation.

4.10 The arrangements for mentoring within the Certificate in Teaching programme are currently underdeveloped. Whilst the university is offering a mentoring programme which is being accessed by a small number of work-based learning staff, there is a need to develop and manage the mentoring process within the Certificate in Teaching programme, and within work-based learning, in a more cohesive manner. The university has the potential to build on its extensive experience of successful partnership and mentoring arrangements, and to roll out these models of practice to the work-based learning sector.

5. THE IMPACT OF THE PROGRAMME ON THE STUDENT TUTORS' PRACTICE

5.1 Almost all of the training organisation managers report an improvement in the quality of training and learning, provided by the student tutors, as a result of their involvement in the programme. The student tutors deploy a range of teaching and learning strategies that meet more effectively the needs of their learners. Most all of the training organisation managers report positively on this culture shift.

5.2 Almost all of the student tutors report that the insights gained from the focus on behaviour management strategies have been particularly beneficial to their practice. One training organisation reported noticeable improvements in the behaviour of the learners.

5.3 All the student tutors demonstrate a clearer understanding of lesson planning, including the identification of individual learning styles. Almost all are more willing to take innovative approaches to training and learning.

5.4 The professionalism of the student tutors has been strengthened considerably as a direct consequence of their participation on the pilot programme. Almost all of the student tutors can discuss confidently the main educational theories covered in the programme and can apply them well to their teaching, training and learning.

5.5 There is good evidence that all the student tutors have improved the standard of their spoken communication. All of them are able to discuss critically their work with their peers and can, as a result of the new knowledge and insights gained through involvement in the UCIT programme, evaluate and improve their practice more effectively.

5.6 The teaching and training observations of the student tutors, carried out by the university staff, are thorough. For almost all the student tutors, the extensive, detailed feedback provided has led to improvements in the quality of their training and learning.

5.7 The quality of the training and learning sessions provided by the student tutors, and which were observed in their work place, ranged from satisfactory to very good, and was mostly good. The ethos in almost all of the sessions was characterised by good learning relationships and was strongly supportive of the learners' needs. In a majority of sessions, there was evidence that the student tutors had worked hard to create an environment which was conducive to learning.

5.8 In a minority of sessions, the planning by the student tutors did not take account of the individual needs of the learners, targets were not set and progress was not reviewed and monitored adequately. In particular, more work needs to be done by the student tutors to identify strategies to support and improve the standards and achievements of the learners' literacy and numeracy. There is a need to include developmental work on personal training plans within the programme. In addition, there was little evidence of planning for workshop-based practical activities to enhance learners occupational and craft skills, particularly the skills of those learners who have not secured placements. Given the changing models of delivery within the work-based learning sector, it is timely for the university to review the learning needs of future student tutors.

5.9 The university assessment strategy has improved significantly over the duration of the inspection. As a result, the student tutors are better informed about assessment timelines and deadlines.

5.10 In the student tutors' written work, and in their assignment work, there is good evidence of marking and signposting for improvement which is supplemented by the one-to-one support sessions provided by the university staff.

6. THE IDENTIFICATION OF FUTURE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

6.1 In almost all of the training organisations involved in the pilot programme, there has been an increase in the confidence and capacity of the student tutors to deliver good quality training and learning.

6.2 In most training organisations, the knowledge and insights gained by the student tutors are used well to inform organisational policies. For example, most of the managers of the training organisations have identified clearly how the outcomes of the pilot programme can be linked to their own internal quality improvement processes. In particular, across a minority of training organisations this has led to an improved focus on the quality of the teaching, training and learning, and achievement and standards.

PART THREE: CONCLUSION AND KEY PRIORITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

7. CONCLUSION

In the area inspected, the quality of education provided by the University of Ulster is very good. The university is meeting effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the student tutors; and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

8. KEY PRIORITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

To promote continuous improvement in the Certificate in Teaching programme, this evaluation has identified a number of key priorities for development, which include the need to:

- further develop the use of information and learning technologies to support programme delivery, and the ongoing development of the students tutors' information technology skills;
- strengthen the context of the programme to ensure that it meets more effectively the particular challenges provided by the work-based learning sector; and
- develop further the arrangements for mentoring the student tutors to ensure their individual learning needs are met more effectively.

TRAINING ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED IN THE EVALUATION

Customised Training
Impact Training
NIE Training Centre
North City Training
Opportunity Youth
Paragon Training
Rutledge Joblink
Springvale Learning
Training for Business
Swann Training
Workforce Training
Youth Action NI

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