

2015 *Teaching@UQ* Consultation Report: Survey of UQ academic staff

Executive Summary

UQ academics with some teaching support staff (n=118) responded to a short survey to provide early input into the development of a new introduction to teaching at UQ program. The responses suggested several implications for the *Teaching@UQ* project team:

- Face-to-face interaction with some online resources is the overwhelmingly preferred mode of delivery for the program
- General teaching and learning guidance contextualised to UQ (e.g. our students, policies, admin procedures) should underpin the program curriculum
- Relevance to practice should be central to any content included in the program with a program curriculum that is also evidence-based
- Facilitators should be selected based on capacity for effective communication and 'fit for purpose' (e.g. experienced educators with knowledge of the topic)
- The program should unfold over multiple sessions with many respondents indicating individual session duration of two hours

Participants and Survey

UQ teaching and support staff were invited to complete a short, online survey from 16 March to 11 April 2015. Academics were invited through several approaches: Associate Deans Academics disseminating in respective faculties, UQ News invite, and email invites to contacts in service units (Student Services, ITaLI). In total, 118 staff responded to the survey.

The survey was intended as a consultative tool to guide the *Teaching@UQ* project team. It included four open comment questions:

- What are the key things an academic new to UQ needs in professional development in preparation for teaching?
- What types of expertise/background should those leading the program have?
- What do you think should be the duration and schedule for sessions in proposed teaching preparation program?
- We are at the beginning of this project, is there anything additional you would like the project team to consider when developing the *Teaching@UQ* program?

And four fixed response questions:

- What is the ideal way for academics to participate in a teaching preparation program?
- Which best describes your career stage?
- Which faculty are you most affiliated with at UQ?
- Would you: Like a summary of these survey results? Participate in another survey to comment on the program structure and objectives? Participate in a focus group to discuss the program structure and objectives?

Analysis

Fixed response (Likert) questions are reported with descriptive statistics. Responses to open-ended questions were analysed using thematic analysis. A subset of the project team worked in pairs to (1) inductively identify the broad themes common across responses to a given question, and (2) code all answers into the identified themes. This allows for the reporting of (1) common themes indicated by participants, (2) distribution of comments by theme, and (3) selected quotes typical of respondents' comments.

Results

The report below displays summary results grouped by questions as asked in the survey.

Demographic information of respondents

A few demographic questions were asked. Figure 1 shows responses to the question, *which faculty are you most affiliated with at UQ?*, with 'other' being service units including library or Institute for Teaching and Learning Innovation (ITaLI). Figure 2 displays answers to the question, *which best describes your career stage?* These data show respondents came from across UQ faculties although EAIT and Science comprised just under half of all respondents. Early career academics including RHD students represented approximately 42% of respondents. The 6% 'other' option for career stage included sessional and professional staff.

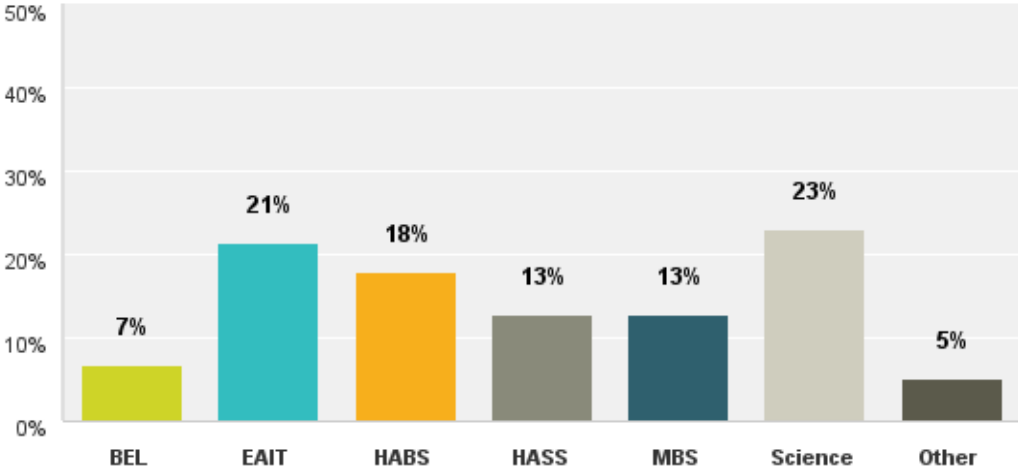


Figure 1: Faculty affiliation of respondents (n=117)

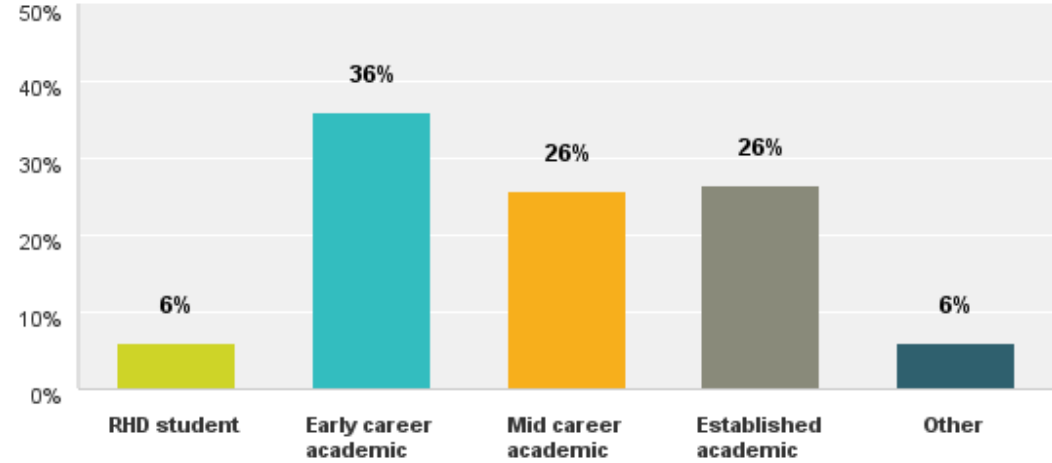


Figure 2: Career stage of respondents (n=117)

How should academics interact in the Teaching@UQ program?

Figure 3 shows the respondents' views on the mode of interaction with the proposed Teaching@UQ program. The majority of respondents (69%) indicated they would prefer for the program to be blended with both online and face-to-face interactions with 60% suggesting more face-to-face than online interactions. Three respondents selected 'other' and wrote ideas as such "half/half", "mentored", and "allow academics to go via online or face-to-face".

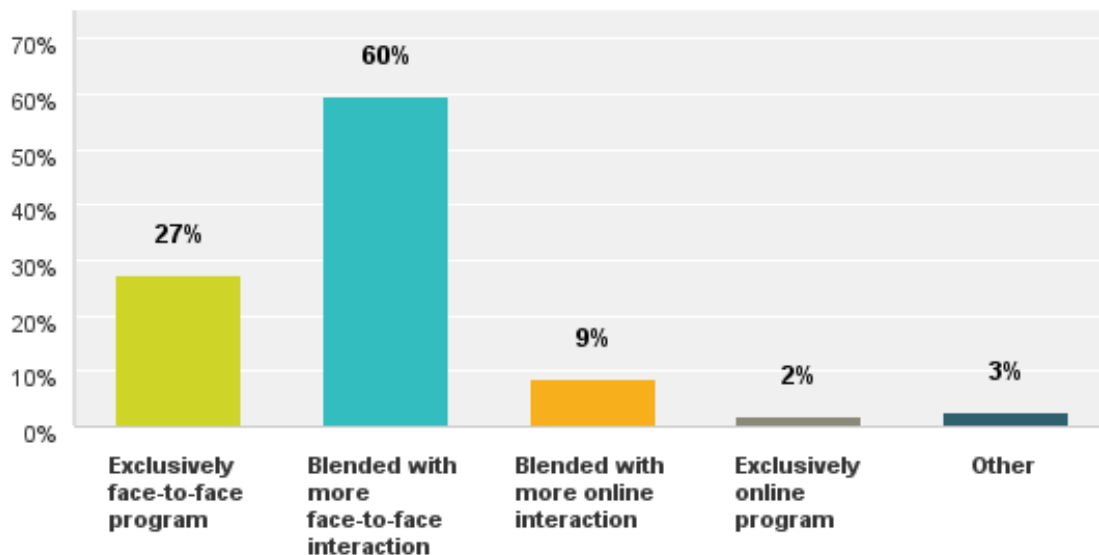


Figure 3: Distribution of responses on preferred mode for interaction with the program (n=114)

What do new academics need to learn in a teaching preparation program?

Respondents were provided with an open text box to answer the question, *what are the key things an academic new to UQ needs in professional development in preparation for teaching?* All 118 respondents entered text, from which 238 statements from participants were coded into 7 themes, see Table 1. The number of codes is higher than the number of participants because some participants' comments fit into more than one theme. Figure 4 displays the quantitative distribution of the comments across the themes.

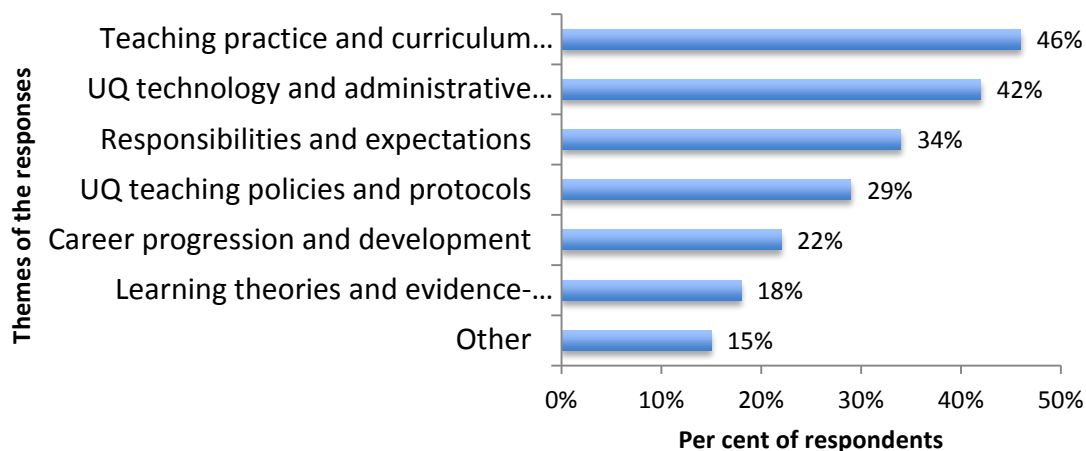


Figure 4: Percentage of respondents who made comments by each theme (Question: *What are the key things an academic new to UQ needs in professional development in preparation for teaching?*)

Table 1: Themes that emerged with descriptive explanation and typical quotes.

What are the key things an academic new to UQ needs in professional development in preparation for teaching?	
Theme	Typical Quotes
<p>Teaching practice and curriculum design Understanding basics of course design, engage students in learning activities, and assess their learning, relative to the program curriculum</p>	<p><i>Fundamentals of course design (aims, outcomes, assessment, syllabus), basic skills in effective presentation and engaging course/lecture design (powerpoint, problem-based learning, small and large group strategies) – (Established academic, EAIT). Designing assessment items and the criteria used for grading, all aligned to LOs Have an understanding of the student's perception of the course/program experience (how do students access information?, the potential for assessment overload, do your students understand the language you use). - (Mid-career academic, Science). Benchmarking: new academics REALLY need to look at other courses being offered in their discipline, school and faculty with a view to ensuring comparability and alignment of course with the rest of the curriculum – (Established academic, HaSS)</i></p>
<p>UQ technology and administrative systems Gaining technical knowledge to use UQ technologies related to administration and eLearning</p>	<p><i>Technical details related to setting up and running a course (e.g. blackboard operation, microphone details, clickers, etc). - (Early career academic, EAIT). Understanding all of the associated systems: Courses.uq.edu.au, Blackboard, Slnet, ECPs, Timetabling. For those of us who are new to UQ, this is a very daunting hurdle as I didn't know what was my responsibility to update, how to access it, and what I was missing. – (Early career academic, HaBS). I would also like a seminar on UQ-related idiosyncrasies: [1] How to make Course Profiles work for you [2] The list of annoying Blackboard stuff (like making your class active and adding tutors, etc.). [3] How to request a teaching space that's not on the other side of campus [4] How to get the lecterns to work (and not, say, keep auto-focusing on you as you lecture). Basically everything but PowerPoints on pedagogy! (Early career academic, EAIT).</i></p>
<p>Responsibilities and expectations Outlining roles, responsibilities, and expectations of teaching and learning including student expectations</p>	<p><i>An understanding of the role and duties of being a course coordinator and a professional teacher. An experience of being a student, having items due, and the mechanisms that they need to adhere to WRT submissions, extensions, and attendance. Notes re this: Many academics start their teaching with NO understanding of their responsibilities to students in terms of 1) reasonable pastoral care, 2) providing access to properly made, recorded materials and 3) consistent administration policy – (Mid-career academic, Science). Guidance on expectations: what the university expects of them, what their HoS expects of them, what the students expect of them – (Mid-career academic, Science).</i></p>
<p>UQ teaching policies and protocols Making sense of UQ policies and procedures at school, faculty, and institutional levels</p>	<p><i>Also policies re: student extensions, assessment, disability, etc. – (Early career academic, HaBS). An understanding that there is a central administration and a Faculty Administration that helps standardize assessment requirements and policy (and an equivalent understanding that they cannot just make up new policies for their own courses as it suits them) – (Mid-career academic, Science). There are a lot of absolute nonsense here that don't exist in many other universities, like cover pages for exams, having to have exam checked by other academics, having to prepare the exam months in advance, having to prepare additional exams for students who missed the first one, etc. etc. A new academic must be warned about this (PhD or Masters student, Science).</i></p>
<p>Career progression and development Linking teaching into broader picture of academic career progression and development</p>	<p><i>Advice about creating a T&L portfolio in preparation for annual reviews, confirmation and tenure.... Information about T&L grant and award schemes. - (Established academic, HaSS). Clear path forward to support both teacher development (e.g. professional continuing education), and research / networking opportunities, all relevant to specific discipline (thus at faculty or department level). – (PhD or Masters student, EAIT). Access to professional development activities related to the scholarship of teaching (e.g Grad Cert program in Higher Ed) – (Mid-career academic, EAIT).</i></p>
<p>Learning theories and evidence-based practices Developing an introductory understanding</p>	<p><i>An appreciation of how students learn. An understanding of teaching methodologies. – (Established academic, EAIT). How different teaching activities affect student learning. – (Early career academic, EAIT). An understanding of current trends in higher education (blended learning, online learning etc) – (Mid-career academic, EAIT)</i></p>
<p>Other</p>	<p><i>How to utilise the library resources and staffing – (Mid-career academic, HaSS). Managing academic role to balance teaching and research – (Established academic HaSS)</i></p>

What should be the duration and frequency for the program?

Respondents were provided with an open text box to answer the question, *what do you think should be the duration and schedule for sessions in proposed teaching preparation program?* Given that the majority (95%) of respondents indicated the program should have face-to-face contact, answers to this question tended to focus on face-to-face interactions. This question allowed respondents to answer three sub-questions: How long should the program be? How often should attendees meet? When should the program happen? Each sub-question was coded into categories, although it should be noted that responses varied widely given the open nature of the question that asked multiple questions. Furthermore, several respondents indicated difficulty in answering the questions as duration and frequency would be dependent on the objectives of the program.

How often should attendees meet?

Ninety-five respondents indicated frequency for the program, which fell into 2 categories: single session (n=15) and multiple sessions (n=80). The majority of respondents suggested that the program should unfold over multiple sessions (see Figure 5).

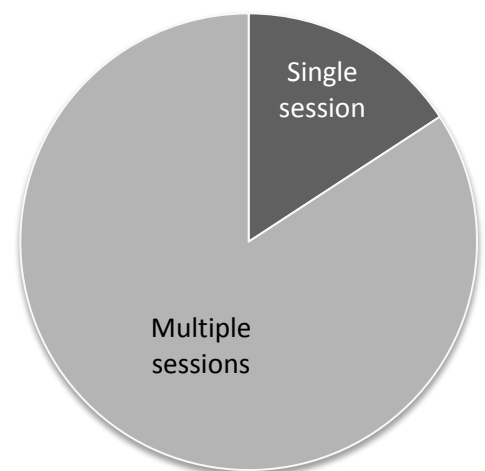


Figure 5: Distribution of response for single or multiple sessions

When should the program happen?

Text that answered this sub-question fell into 3 categories: before semester (n=69), during the semester (n=48), and at the end of the semester (n=8) with most respondents indicating multiple sessions should occur both before and during the semester.

How long should the program be?

Ninety-four entered text that answered with many respondents (n=40) suggesting no single session should be more than two hours at a time compared to others (n=26) who indicated sessions could be more than two hours but less than a day. Some respondents (n=12) suggested a single intensive day might be suitable with others (n=12) indicating a program with a total duration of 2-5 days spread over a semester or year. Just 4 respondents expressed preference for a program in total duration of more than a week.

What type of expertise is needed for those facilitating the program?

Respondents were provided with open text box to answer the question, *what types of expertise/background should those leading the program have?* All 118 respondents entered text, from which 219 statements from participants were coded into 8 themes, see Table 2. The number of codes is higher than the number of participants because some participants' responses fit into more than one theme. Figure 6 displays the quantitative distribution of the comments across the themes.

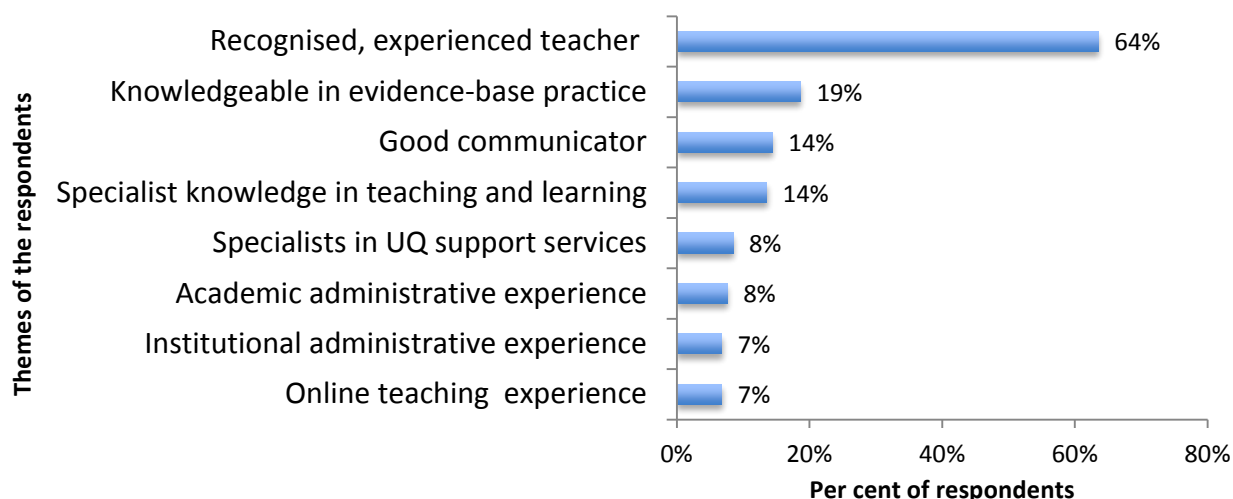


Figure 6: Percentage of respondents who made comments by each theme (Question: *What types of expertise/background should those leading the program have?*)

Some respondents (n=21) also mentioned ‘where’ those leading the program should come from, with 15 indicating leaders should be discipline-based and 6 suggesting inter-disciplinary leaders.

Table 2: Themes that emerged with descriptive explanation and typical quotes.

What types of expertise/background should those leading the program have?	
Theme	Typical Quotes
Recognised, experienced teacher	<i>Have taught a course at UQ - used the tools, have experience with our students and common issues (Early career academic, HaBS). Anyone leading the program should have a demonstrated expertise in either design or implementation of effective teaching practice... (Early career academic, BEL).</i>
Knowledgeable in evidence-base practice	<i>Educational designers with an established track record in research on pedagogy in universities, and established academics who have won awards for teaching and are able to articulate their methods and objectives clearly (many of the best teachers I have met couldn't do this) (Early career academic, HaSS).</i>
Good communicator	<i>Effective communication and leadership skills (Mid-career academic, MBS).</i>
Specialist knowledge in teaching and learning	<i>Probably want different people for different sessions (e.g, one person to present on keeping large classes engaged in face-to-face interactions, and a different person to present on on-line learning for large classes - chances are the same person won't have strengths in both) (Established academic, HaBS).</i>
Specialists in UQ support services	<i>Someone with IT expertise who is very patient; librarian; student service to advise what is on offer for students (Early career academic, MBS).</i>
Academic administrative experience	<i>ADA level for advice about preparing T&L portfolio for confirmation, promotion, policies and procedures. DOS for School level support and policy environment (Established academic, HaSS).</i>
Institutional administrative experience	<i>... evidencing teaching performance/annual review/reporting - Qt index, awards, SeCATs, peer review, awards, T&L grants, T&L committee service etc what counts and what doesn't... where to get more help/further PD opportunities (Early career academic, unit not listed).</i>
Online teaching experience	<i>Educational expertise and expertise in delivering online presentations (Established academic, MBS).</i>

What else should we know?

Respondents were provided with an open text box to answer the question, *we are at the beginning of this project, is there anything additional you would like the project team to consider when developing the Teaching@UQ program?* Of the 118 participants, 74 entered text, from which 104 statements from participants were coded into 5 themes, see Table 3. The number of codes is higher than the number of participants because some participants' responses fit into more than one theme. A selection of comments, whose content has not already been covered in this report, is included in Table 3 organised by theme.

Most comments referred to the nature and content of the programme (46% of respondents), facilitating and managing the program (35%), and acknowledging the diversity of academic staff (22%). There were miscellaneous comments classified as 'other' (12%), comments about the networking potential for the program (11%) and a few comments about the need for recognition of participation (5%).

Table 3: Themes that emerged with descriptive explanation and typical quotes.

Is there anything additional you would like the project team to consider?	
Theme	Typical Quotes
Content in program	<i>The aims. Not clear if this is the mechanics of running courses, how to engage, how to assess, UQ specific etc. There should already be 'how to be a better teacher' programs... this could be a UQ specific module added to one of those – (Mid-career academic, EAIT). As a research focused staff, I have experience in research supervision of RHD students, but little in undergrad teaching. It would be great if the project team can incorporate something to help people like me develop our teaching skills (Mid-career academic, Institute of Molecular Biosciences). New teachers need to know that their experiences are not unique, and that teaching will be difficult and time-consuming, especially starting out. Adjusting expectations accordingly would be an important outcome of this program – (Established academic, EAIT). Recognise that on-line is not always better. There seems to be a belief at UQ that teaching innovation must be IT based. Flipped classrooms are good in some instances, but face-to-face teaching should not be ignored – (Established academic, HaBS)</i>
Facilitating and managing program	<i>Involving students in the program as teaching is an interactive practice between lecturers and students. Students' input would be valuable (Mid-career, EAIT). The current offerings are quite practically based, which is fine, but it would be nice to also have sessions on more advanced pedagogy topics, and on topics related to program-level issues (Established academic, Science). Try not to add too much new work and too many new systems.(Early career academic, HaSS). Could the existing 'visit a course framework' be employed here? Preparing feedback for other academics could help promote reflection. (New academic, Other)</i>
Diversity of academic staff	<i>Part-time staff - usually so busy with their role it is extremely difficult to fit in this sort of training (Established academic, HaBS). Include help for clinical academics (there are not many of us but we do a large amount of small group teaching and most of us have high professional qualifications but not much teaching experience) – (Early career academic, Science) .</i>
Other	<i>Who is included? As an on-going but sessional member of staff I am massively disadvantaged in training and development (not to benefit me, but to be able to do the job I am employed for). I recently asked if I could attend a training course for a couple of hours but there seems to be no budget to pay me, so either I spend my own time doing training without be paid or I am able to do my job less well than I might. It isn't a fair choice (Sessional academic, HaSS).</i>
Networking potential	<i>When I did the introduction to university teaching program, I found it very useful to meet other new teachers from elsewhere in the university. Supporting this further would be good, perhaps through something like a buddy or mentor system to give new teachers someone (perhaps not from their own school) to talk to from time to time (Mid-career, academic, EAIT).</i>
Recognition of participants	<i>Make sure those receiving the program are recognised for their work through the workload calculator and through the promotions process (Established academic, HaSS).</i>

