

Teaching@UQ Summary of Consultations – Key Messages

Purpose of consultation: To identify needs of academics starting to teach at UQ and the essential features of an orientation program that meets those needs and ‘fits’ with broader teaching professional development at UQ.

Scope of consultation: Teaching staff (survey; workshops exploring online courses for new academics), Associate Deans Academic (interviews), key senior leaders (interviews), technology-enabled learning (TEL) 2015 grant recipients (open forum discussion), all UQ staff (comment box on website).

Two themes emerged from the needs analysis of the broad consultation process:

1. Any program must acknowledge diversity of UQ teaching staff (e.g. prior experience within and outside of Australia; HR classification; level of responsibility in teaching). Diverse teaching staff means diverse training needs. Academics articulated specific needs such as: practical teaching tips, an understanding of ‘what works’ to enhance student learning, specific instruction on using technology in teaching, and introduction to key teaching policy.
2. Within the current staff development landscape, there is a need for a program (e.g. ‘orientation gap’ with current efforts described as ‘patchy’) which is ideally holistic in approach and recognises the multiple responsibilities of an academic and which aids the transition to teaching at UQ in practical ways. The relationship between this new program and broader staff development for academics needs to be explicitly articulated.

Broad consultation indicated that an orientation program for staff new to teaching would be effective if it:

Articulates:

- UQ’s vision for teaching and learning (TL), particularly encouraging teachers to be passionate and innovative in communicating their discipline to their students.
- An expectation that academics new to UQ attend orientation and engage with online resources to learn about UQ’s teaching culture and systems and appropriate professional standards.
- An ‘easy to follow’ pathway for any staff employed to teach at UQ that will help them to ‘navigate’ the UQ TL environment and be successful from the first semester of teaching.

Comprises:

- Interactive face-to-face sessions supported by online resources and activities.
- The use of effective and experienced UQ teaching staff as presenters from relevant service units (e.g. ITS, Library, ITaLI, Student Services) and relevant disciplines.
- Network building activities with a modularised program structure to accommodate staff diversity.
- Online resources (e.g. ‘just in time, just for me’ toolkit) to support teachers in their first semester.
- Opportunities for mentoring and peer observation linked to existing initiatives.

Provides:

- Evidence-based foundational TL advice, focussing on how students learn best.
- Face-to-face sessions supported with free open access online materials.
- Contextualised instruction on UQ’s policies, frameworks, and operational systems used in schools and faculties.
- A link to staff with key TL roles at school and faculty level.
- Networking opportunities at multiple levels (e.g. school, discipline, faculty, institution).
- A springboard that encourages further and ongoing professional development in teaching and learning.
- Information on performance reviews and recognition of TL at multiple levels (e.g. school, faculty, institution, national).

Contributes to:

- Creating a positive UQ TL culture that is learning-orientated.
- The professional development of motivated and passionate teachers.
- Building effective teaching peer and mentoring networks.
- Observable enhancement of TL evidenced by a range of data (e.g. ECP, observations, student evaluations).
- More effective use of available systems, policies, processes and technologies to support learning and teaching.