Notes for Mentors of New Academic Staff with PGCE Qualification

Background

Staff with a PGCE are not required to undertake the whole of the Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice. However they are asked to compile a portfolio to show their development of practice in five key areas of teaching. Mentors of new staff with a PGCE will have a more limited role than those working with participants of the full Certificate programme. These notes attempt to define the requirements under these circumstances.

Aims of Mentoring which do apply:

- **To provide general induction support.**
  Mentors should take responsibility for ensuring that a reasonable induction to the School is provided. Being personally involved in this will help to create an early relationship between the mentor and the new lecturer. However the framework provided by an induction programme can also be a useful way for the new lecturer to meet and get to know other key members of the School. The best induction programme would probably be one with a written structure giving full names and job titles of all involved and using a mix of mentor and other staff.

- **To provide a source of help and advice on all aspects of the professional role including teaching, research and administration.**
  The mentor should have the ongoing induction role of explaining how different systems work in theory (and practice) and how the new lecturer relates to any changes in progress. The mentor should act as a point of referral, recommending who to approach in the School or elsewhere for specialist information. For the first 4-6 months, agreeing some slots for regular meetings is very useful. These can always be cancelled if not needed but they do give the new lecturer the reassurance of some guaranteed time with you.

- **To provide constructive feedback on teaching activities.**
  Even experienced new lecturers will sometimes need to discuss issues such as course design, assessment, and student support systems. Mentors can usefully act as a sounding-board, provide information on Reading requirements and systems, give ideas on alternative sources of subject-specific information or suggest other colleagues who may already have experience in the area concerned.

- **To provide a ‘critical friend’ outside the management framework.**
  As a part of the portfolio, new lecturers are required to participate in six peer observation of teaching activities over 2 years. Normally at least two of these observations should be undertaken with the mentor. The remainder may be done with other School colleagues or the Head, perhaps as part of the School peer observation scheme or any probationary requirements. The precise split of the new lecturer being the observed or the observer is flexible but they must be observed in at least 3 of the 6 observations. The remaining 3 may have them acting as an observer. They should take the role of observer at least once and mentors are particularly requested to provide this opportunity by volunteering to be observed.

Mentors are **not required to keep** a record of notes of their meetings or teaching observations with their mentees, although mentees will need these notes for their portfolios.

The portfolio consists of a reflective narrative on development in each of the five areas listed and records of 6 reciprocal observations of teaching:

1. Design and planning of a module or course
2. Teaching and supporting learning
3. Assessment and feedback
4. Student support and creative learning environments
5. Evaluating and developing teaching practice

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