

Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching and Learning (PGCertTL) Information Sheet

What is the Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching and Learning (PGCertTL)?

The Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching and Learning (PGCertTL) is a Masters' level programme founded on reflective professional practice. It provides detailed pedagogical study of learning and teaching, opportunities for reflective practice, practical global support and scholarship.

Many universities offer this type of programme for teaching staff and consider it a key stage in your early teaching career. It is often part of probation for staff. Successful completion of the PGCertTL leads to Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy. The PGCertTL replaces the previous Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching (PGCILT) and Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PGCAP).

Is the PGCertTL for me?

The PGCertTL is designed for colleagues who require detailed pedagogic knowledge of learning and teaching and who can commit to 2-years of formal study. It is intended for staff for whom teaching and learning is a substantive part of their work¹.

We expect that staff undertaking the PGCertTL might be in the following categories (these align with Descriptor 2 of the UKPSF):

- a. Early career academics.
- b. Academic-related and/or support staff holding substantive teaching and learning responsibilities.
- c. Experienced academics relatively new to UK higher education.
- d. Staff with (sometimes significant) teaching-only responsibilities including, for example, within work-based settings.

¹ Teaching includes (but is not limited to) design and delivery of live sessions (e.g. seminars/webinars, tutorials, lectures, studio or lab sessions); design of learning resources and activities; assessment design, marking and feedback; provision of support for learning (e.g. demonstrating, tutoring, field trip support, tutorial and seminar support); dissertation or project support and supervision; course and programme design, and course and programme leadership.

Do I need previous teaching experience to undertake the PGCertTL?

The PGCertTL is practice-based, so you need previous experience of teaching.

Minimum previous experience:

- Minimum of FTE 120 hours of prior teaching experience in higher education in any HEI.
- Substantive personal teaching responsibilities such as designing and delivering teaching sessions, setting and marking assessment (formative and/or summative), providing feedback to students, course development etc.

If you do not have the requisite experience please look at the other opportunities provided by the LTA including Getting Started, New to Teaching Network and Learning About Learning.

Do I need to be currently teaching to undertake the PGCertTL?

Yes, the PGCertTL is practice-based therefore you need to be currently teaching to be able to undertake the assessments and achieve the learning outcomes. Teaching practice accounts for approximately 1/3 of the programme.

Minimum current teaching responsibilities:

- 5 hours per week substantive teaching responsibilities for each full semester of the course.
- Must have responsibility for design and planning of learning activities or programmes of study; design and marking of assessments, feedback to students and course development etc.

If there is a semester when you will not be teaching, please speak to the PGCertTL team to discuss whether the programme is right for you at this time.

How is the PGCertTL delivered?

The PGCertTL is delivered online via the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). Students participate in live sessions and also asynchronous activities. This includes practical micro-teaching sessions and observed practice to allow the development and enhancement of teaching practice.

How much time will it take to study?

The PGCertTL is 60 credits, this equates to c.600 hours of study. Each course is 15 credits i.e. 150 hours of study. This is approximately 15 hours of study per week of each course. This is standard practice in higher education. On the PGCertTL is breaks down as approximately 5 hours scheduled study including live sessions and asynchronous activities, 5 hours teaching practice and 5 hours self-study. You should ensure that you will have sufficient time for your studies before commencing the programme.

How does this impact on my workload and probation?

You should discuss your workload with your line manager to see how the PGCertTL might fit with your other work responsibilities.

It may be that completion of the PGCertTL is a requirement of your probation. You should discuss this with your line manager.

How long does it take to complete the PGCertTL?

The PGCertTL is designed to be completed over 2 years part-time. It is not possible to complete the programme more quickly than this as you need this time to reflect on and develop your teaching practice. Should you require it, you may take up to 4 years to complete the PGCertTL.

Are there programme and course representatives?

Yes, there are course representatives for each course, and a student representative for the PGCertTL programme. These representatives participate in the Staff-Student Liaison Committee.

English Language requirements

If your first language is not English, you have to demonstrate that your English language ability is strong enough to succeed on the PGCertTL programme. You will require 6.5 IELTS as stated in the [Heriot-Watt English Language Requirements](#).

Recognition of prior learning

If you have previously been in higher education, have passed courses or have academically relevant professional experience, then this could count as credit towards your Heriot-Watt qualification. Full details of this is available in the [Recognition of Prior Learning Policy](#).

If you have previously completed the Heriot-Watt LEADS programme or any of the courses on the Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching (PGCILT) then you may be eligible for Recognition of Prior Learning.

Please email PGCertTL@hw.ac.uk for further information on applying for Recognition of Prior Learning.

How do I apply?

Application is through completion of an [application form](#). You may also be invited to attend a short interview.

Please email PGCertTL@hw.ac.uk if you require any support to complete the application or if you would like to discuss applying with one of the PGCertTL team.