



Professional Development in Tertiary Teaching for Staff in Teaching Roles at Curtin Guidelines



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1. Introduction

Curtin Guidelines for the continuous professional development of teaching staff

This document is an explanatory guide to support the *Professional Development in Tertiary Teaching for Staff policy* (the Policy).

The Policy is underpinned by:

- *Curtin's Teaching Excellence Criteria* to which excellent teachers can aspire; and
- Provisions contained in Section 56 of the *Academic, Professional and General Staff Enterprise Agreement 2012-2016*.

The guidelines are based on good practice, research into teaching and learning, and University-wide feedback from Curtin staff when reviewing the Policy.



Note: These are guidelines only. Please note during 2016-17 changes are being made to professional development for staff involved in learning and teaching activities – including the existing Foundations of Learning and Teaching (FOLT) program – to be in line with the new University Strategic Plan, new Enterprise Bargaining Agreement and impending revisions to the Curtin Expectations to Academic Performance. Thus, please check with your line managers and Curtin Learning and Teaching staff about requirements for staff in this transition period.

2. Policy principles

Professional development in tertiary teaching for teaching staff policy – defining Curtin’s commitment to continuous development

2.1 *Providing opportunities for staff*

The University is committed to providing professional learning opportunities for staff in teaching roles both from an individual, professional development perspective and also from a University perspective to enhance teaching quality and assure the quality of teaching at Curtin.

From an **individual perspective**, the *Academic, Professional and General Staff Enterprise Agreement 2012-2016 (EBA)*, stipulates that:

- Staff are provided with career and professional development opportunities which balance the needs of the individual and those of the University (Section 56.1);
- Those professional development opportunities encourage a more highly skilled individual, provide greater employment opportunities, and promote recognition of those skills attained (Section 56.2); and
- Professional development activities are identified and incorporated in individual staff work plans (Section 56.3).

The Policy supports the EBA by encouraging staff to undertake professional development opportunities on an annual basis. This is professional development which is relevant to the individual teaching role.

From the **University perspective**, assurance of the quality of teaching is paramount for the institution. Therefore, professional development which is appropriate and relevant to the individual’s teaching role will enhance teaching quality.

Internal professional development opportunities embed *Curtin’s Teaching Excellence Criteria* which in turn provides the individual with a set of criteria in which to gather evidence of quality teaching and learning to assist them with academic promotions, career aspirations, as well as for strengthening Faculty, University and National award and grant applications.

2.2 Casual/sessional academic requirements

The University has been committed to creating and maintaining an effective group of skilled sessional staff, appropriately trained in teaching and learning at Curtin since 2007 when the Policy was first introduced. Casual/sessional staff come to teach at Curtin with a wide range of skills and experience in industry and tertiary teaching. In order to assure the quality of our casual/sessional academic staff and staff in a teaching role new-to-Curtin, are required to undertake the *Foundations of Teaching and Learning* program. In this way, all staff have a base-level of skills for teaching at Curtin.

All sessional fellows, casual/sessional academic staff and postgraduate students employed as casual academic staff in teaching roles are required to undertake a minimum of seven hours of professional development in teaching at the tertiary level, within the first six months of employment. These staff will be reimbursed for this investment of time.

2.3 Ongoing commitment to professional development

To support the University's obligation in providing ongoing professional development opportunities for staff in teaching roles, an annual commitment of seven hours is prescribed. The intention is for this to be a developmental opportunity to benefit both the individual and the University.

2.4 Supporting staff

The professional development undertaken will support the needs of the staff and the needs of the University, in particular the assurance of teaching quality and enhancing teaching and learning. The professional development considered appropriate is any professional learning activity relevant to teaching and learning processes, practices, or scholarship. The appropriateness within this range is determined by the line manager or Head of School, in consultation with the individual about their specific professional development needs.

3. Defining teaching staff

Staff in a teaching role at Curtin – who does this include?

The broad classification of *Teaching staff* is defined as all staff employed on a casual/sessional academic, teaching focused and/or teaching research contract. Within this there are a number of staff cohorts including; casual or sessional academics; postgraduate students employed as sessional staff; new-to-Curtin staff; staff teaching offshore; staff teaching online; teaching academics; and teaching research staff. The *Professional Development in Tertiary Teaching for Teaching Staff policy* is applicable to **staff employed for more than 12 hours per standard semester** ie;

- All **casual or sessional academics** in a teaching role are required to undertake the [Foundations of Learning and Teaching](#) program as a minimum requirement;
- **Postgraduate students** in a teaching role employed as sessional staff are required to undertake the Foundations of Learning and Teaching program as a minimum requirement;
- **New-to-Curtin staff** in a teaching role are those staff commencing with the University for the first time or are re-commencing with the University after a 12 month break in service, are required to undertake the [Foundations of Learning and Teaching](#) program as a minimum requirement;
- All staff employed in a **Teaching Academic role** are required to undertake relevant professional development in teaching and learning determined annually as part of their [Work Planning and Performance Review](#) (WPPR) in consultation with their line manager/Head of School;
- All staff employed in a **Teaching Research** role are required to undertake relevant professional development in teaching and learning determined annually as part of their [Work Planning and Performance Review](#) (WPPR) in consultation with their line manager/Head of School;
- All staff employed in a **teaching role offshore** at a Curtin campus are required to undertake relevant professional development in teaching and learning determined annually as part of their [Work Planning and Performance Review](#) (WPPR) in consultation with their line manager/Head of School; and
- All staff employed in an **online teaching role** are required to undertake relevant professional development in teaching and learning determined annually as part of their [Work Planning and Performance Review](#) (WPPR) in consultation with their line manager/Head of School.

4. Defining professional development

What types of professional development are applicable?

The intention of the Policy is not to be prescriptive with regards to the types of professional learning activities so encompasses a wide variety of professional learning activities and programs. The applicability is that the professional learning must be **relevant to teaching and learning processes, practices, or scholarship**.

The emphasis is on the appropriateness to the needs of the individual teaching staff member. It is essential that the professional development is integrated with the teaching involved for improvement of teaching and development of the individual to occur. Programs that are relevant to the teaching and learning activities should be determined by the line manager or Head of School usually conducted during their Work Planning and Performance Review (WPPR) discussions. It is not the intention to mandate attendance at a centrally offered professional development program. A range of programs will be on offer but it is up to the individual and their line manager to determine what is appropriate for their professional development in order to enhance their teaching and learning.

There is a wide variety of professional development opportunities relevant to teaching and learning both internal and external to the University. Internal programs provided by the Curtin Learning Institute and specific teaching and learning sessions conducted by the School or Faculty. External to Curtin these may include teaching and learning sessions or programs hosted by other Universities, conference organising bodies, higher education training providers, or online offerings. Some **examples** include but are not limited to:

- Formal School or Faculty sharing events with the presentation of scholarship of teaching and learning or teaching and learning research findings;
- University-wide professional learning programs provided or coordinated by the Curtin Learning Institute;
- State, national and international teaching and learning conferences eg Western Australian Teaching and Learning Forum, (OLT) Western Australian Network and Dissemination sharing events.

Some professional learning **accreditation requirements** may be applicable but will be determined on a case-by-case basis as to their relevance to teaching and learning processes, practices or scholarship, in discussion with the line manager/Head of School. It is not the intention to duplicate current requirements but to enhance and work with what is currently required by the accrediting bodies.

5. Workload plans

Is the professional learning requirement included in workload plans?

It is not the intention of the Policy to burden staff with additional tasks to already busy workloads but to ensure each individual in a teaching role has the opportunity to undertake professional learning that is developmental and tailored to the individual (by discussion with their line manager/Head of School).

The EBA prescribes that professional development activities are identified and incorporated in individual staff work plans and this is best achieved during the Work Planning and Performance Review (WPPR) discussion with their line manager.

6. Commitment

The Policy requires a commitment from staff in a teaching role to undertake seven hours per year for professional development in teaching at the tertiary level. The intention is that this is developmental and professional development activities identified to specifically to meet the needs of the individual.

Casual/sessional academics are required to undertake the *Foundations of Learning and Teaching* (seven hour) program provided by the University and will be paid for these hours as prescribed in the Policy.

7. Funding

Who covers costs incurred?

7.1 Casual/sessional academic staff

As with the current practice, payment of casual/sessional academics for the time to undertake the required *Foundations of Learning and Teaching* is provided by the relevant School.

7.2 Contact and continuing staff

The process, authorisation and payment for attendance at any external teaching and learning professional development activity will be the responsibility of the teaching area where the staff member is employed. This is consistent with current practice.

7.3 Staff teaching offshore

Any costs incurred for professional development in teaching and learning for staff in teaching roles offshore will be the responsibility of their area/school at that Campus (eg Sarawak, Singapore, Hong Kong Mauritius, Sydney). Where possible, Curtin professional development programs will be available in a virtual or online format.

8. Recording professional development

How and where is the professional development recorded?

Identifying professional development is normally done during Work Planning and Performance Review (WPPR) discussions. On other occasions, staff will identify an appropriate professional learning activity eg workshop or conference and discuss or submit a request to their line manager for attendance, authorisation of funding and timing. As outlined in the section *Defining Professional Learning*, professional development relevant to teaching and learning will be provided internally by Curtin or externally to Curtin. Therefore the process for recording the professional development is slightly different for each.

8.1 Internal to Curtin

Professional development programs facilitated or coordinated by the Curtin Learning Institute will be recorded when staff register to attend a specific session in the iPerform. Instructions for registration will normally be provided via broadcast email when the program is available e.g.

Registration:

1. Log in to **Staff OASIS**
2. Click on **iPerform** (under the “my work” tab)
3. Click on **Learn** (on the top bar)
4. Click on **Browse for Training**
5. Click on the **name of the course** you wish to attend
6. Click on **Request**, and then **Submit**

8.2 External to Curtin

In discussion with the line manager/Head of School or after the specific workshop, seminar, or conference, the staff member can be manually added in iPerform by the individual eg

Recording External Professional Development:

1. Log in to **Staff OASIS**
2. Click on **iPerform** (under the “my work” tab)
3. Click on **My Training** (icon in the middle)
4. Click on **Options** dropdown box (top left)
5. Click on **Add External Training**
6. Enter training details
7. Click **Submit** (goes to line manager for sign-off)

This will ensure that all professional development is recorded for each individual and will assist in future Work Planning and Performance Review (WPPR) discussions.

9. Responsibilities

What do I have to do?

Specific professional development requirements for each individual is best managed at the local level via Work Planning and Performance Review (WPPR) discussions between the individual and the line manager/Head of School. These requirements will differ between roles and individual strengths in their role. The intention is for the professional development to enhance teaching and learning, assure teaching quality, contribute to career opportunities, and most importantly provide opportunities for ongoing learning for staff in teaching roles.

9.1 Line Managers/Heads of School

Line Managers/Heads of School are responsible for implementation and monitoring compliance of the *Professional Development in Tertiary Teaching for Staff policy* in their work area.

- For contract and continuing staff in a teaching role, this normally forms part of the Work Planning and Performance Review (WPPR) discussion. In this way both the individual needs of the teaching staff member and the needs of the area can be identified. It is recommended that this be monitored annually.
- For casual/sessional staff in a teaching role, they must have undertaken the *Foundations of Learning and Teaching* program within the first six months of teaching at Curtin. It is recommended that this be monitored each semester to ensure Curtin’s casual/sessional staff have the fundamentals for teaching at Curtin.

9.2 Individual staff member

It is the responsibility of each individual for their own professional development to actively participate in professional development that is directly relevant and applicable to their teaching situation. This should be in discussion with their line manager/Head of School in order to tailor the professional learning to the needs of the individual.

Professional development requirements prescribed by accreditation bodies, where appropriate to teaching and learning, should be included in the individual's annual development.

10. Exemptions

Am I exempt?

If staff are required to undertake a minimum of seven hours or more, of professional learning in relevant teaching and learning, then they will have met the requirements of the *Professional Development in Tertiary Teaching for Staff* policy and would not be required to undertake an additional seven hours. Any exemptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Education or delegate.

11. References

1. Curtin Teaching and Learning (2013). Teaching Excellence at Curtin, September 2013. Available at: http://ctl.curtin.edu.au/teaching_learning_practice/
2. Curtin Learning Institute (2014). Professional Development in Tertiary Teaching for Staff policy Consultation Feedback (26 August – 19 September 2014). Collated 29 September.