Handout 8 – Professional Sample Submission



**University of Far Far Away**

**Postgraduate Diploma in Community Learning and Development**

Written Submission for CLD Standards Council Approval August 2014 UPDATE TO ENSURE DATES CURRENT**A. Background information, purpose and rationale**

The Postgraduate Diploma in Community Learning and Development (CLD) is a blended work based learning programme, forming part of an M.Ed CLD validated by the University of Far Far Away and delivered at the School of Clever People, Princess College, Far Far Away and online. This document refers to both the PG Dip CLD and the M.Ed outlining how they are related but may potentially involve two distinct groups of participants.

**University of Far Far Away**

One of the oldest Universities in CLD Land, the University of Far Far Away is today at the forefront of teaching, learning and discovery. The 'global university of the farthest reaches', it has an international outlook and a commitment to excellence in teaching and research. Curriculum reform in 2010 modernised the structure, content and delivery of degrees to ensure they match the needs of graduates and employers, with more flexible entry and exit and enhanced student support. All programmes must now demonstrate how they support graduates to leave the University with enhanced skills as critical thinkers and effective communicators, and better prepared to be active citizens.

The University of Far Far Away is committed to fully embedding Equality and Diversity principles across the whole University and has developed its second Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Equality Scheme. The outcomes have been developed in consultation with staff, students and external partners, and include an action plan setting out the University’s aims for 2014-2024. The University is fully committed to equality for all its staff and students

The University of Far Far Away also validates a Community Learning & Development with Applied Theology programme delivered by the Intergalactic Space College (ISC) in Glasgow. This proposal mentions quality enhancements possible at both Far Far Away and the ISC in Glasgow.

**School of Education**

The School of Clever People at the University of Far Far Away seeks to contribute to the development of a world class education system in CLD Land through excellence in teaching, and research which influences policy and informs practice. The work of the School of Clever People is centred on the career and lifelong learning of educators and related professionals and includes a wide range of undergraduate, postgraduate and research degrees in education, music and music education. The staff team work closely together to bring congruent educational philosophies and distinctive pedagogic approaches to professional development programmes for educators in all sectors, including community education, early years, schools and post-compulsory. In 2013 - 2015 the Ring project (a School of Clever People/Far Far Away City Council partnership project funded by Creative CLD Land) aims to embed creativity in all School of Clever People programmes. The purpose of the project is to support practitioners across all sectors to develop creative approaches to education. The School is at the forefront of the use of emergent communication technologies for interactive and distance learning. In line with University level curriculum reform, all professional development programmes aim to encourage independent thinking and reflection on personal and professional effectiveness to improve practice. Professional Standards, such as the CLD competences, are at the heart of provision and provide the structure for the range of programmes offered. The aim of the school is to lead innovation in the field of professional education, and to help postgraduate practitioners develop as agents for change within an environment of academic as well as professional rigour.

**CLD Partnership**

The School of Clever People is committed to partnership. In relation to community learning and development, a dynamic CLD partnership has existed since 2007. This partnership has representation from local authority CLD services and the voluntary sector; it informs the development of relevant University programmes and, in particular, oversees the Postgraduate Diploma in CLD. Students on the programme are represented on the partnership. Current membership is:

Far Far Away City Council

Far Far Awayshire Council

Top Corner Council

Off the Map Council

Far Far Away College

Workers Educational Club CLD Land

Student representative

The partnership was established to address the identified need for a viable programme of education in the domain of Community Learning and Development. Since 2012 it has been involved in the development and validation of the postgraduate programme, marketing the programme to potential participants, supporting teaching, learning and assessment and programme evaluation. The redeveloped Postgraduate Diploma in CLD, now brought forward for approval, is fully informed by partnership discussions.

**The audience(s) for the programme**

In the past, the audience was mainly unqualified practitioners in full or part time CLD related posts, for whom a work-based route to a professional qualification was imperative. In the first cohort these were drawn only from employers in the farthest reaches; in subsequent cohorts practitioners came from a wider range of contexts across CLD Land, with good representation from the voluntary sector. Group sizes have fluctuated, however, and increasingly, employer support for participants is diminished with many having to pay their own fees and programme related costs. Discussions with partners and at national level indicate that financial support for practitioners wishing to undertake qualifying programmes is no longer as available as it was. In these circumstances, this audience alone may no longer provide viable groups.

Thus, whilst the unqualified practitioner remains the central audience for the Postgraduate Diploma, to increase the sustainability of the programme we also hope to attract qualified practitioners to courses within the programme, who want to update their knowledge, understanding and skills, contribute to research in the field and achieve masters credits towards an M.Ed CLD. Particularly in the context of Standards Council registration and the expectations of continuing professional development, this may provide a second audience for courses within the M.Ed programme. We believe that these two groups can be fruitfully combined, in online learning communities which will benefit from different perspectives, experience and interests.

This wider audience for the courses within the Postgraduate Diploma and M.Ed programme was identified in discussion with students and mentors involved in the 2012-2013 diploma programme, the CLD partnership and the Farthest Reaches Alliance. The Furthest Reaches Alliance is a network of seven CLD Partnerships from Off-the- Map, Box-in-the-Corner, Toplands, Furthest-Right, On-the- Watter, Far Far Awayshire and Far Far Away City.

**The promotional strategy for the programme**

Promotion of the programme takes many forms. The programme is included in more general promotional materials for postgraduate provision at the School of Clever People, University of Far Far Away published in the Times Educational Supplement, distributed to all CLD Land local authority education departments and circulated through international contacts. In addition, an online information session for prospective postgraduate students at the School of Clever People was held in June 2013, to supplement the information day held at University level.

The programme is promoted at local level by CLD partners and the Farthest Reaches Alliance who distribute information widely to staff and volunteers. Former students and students on our undergraduate courses are also an important source of publicity, as are national agencies such as Youth Chain CLD Land, Learning Chain CLD Land, CLD Land Community Development Centre, Education CLD Land and the CLD Standards Council.

**Aims and objectives**

The aims of the programme are to extend the skills, knowledge and understanding of the participants by:

* increasing their capacity to meet the changing demands of professional practice by taking an evidence-based approach to personal and professional development;
* developing their capacity to analyse critically evidence and arguments to support professional judgements in complex and ambiguous situations;
* providing opportunities to frame professional enquiries into practice and so make an informed contribution to current professional debates and discussions;
* providing them with opportunities to apply advanced knowledge and understanding of a range of theoretical perspectives and approaches to enhance personal professional practice;
* developing their capacity to shape, lead and deliver change-solutions in a variety of practice settings;
* exploiting opportunities to use research to generate professional knowledge and enhance understanding and practice.

**Learning Outcomes are linked to key competences as defined by CLD Standards Council**

By the end of the programme, participants will have demonstrated that they:

* Know and understand the community in which they work
* Build and maintain relationships with individuals and groups
* Provide learning and development opportunities in a range of contexts
* Facilitate and promote community empowerment
* Organise and manage resources
* Develop and support collaborative working
* Evaluate and inform practice

**SCQF level**

The programme is at SCQF level 11. The Diploma consists of 120 Scottish Masters Credits, the M.Ed 180 Scottish Masters Credits. The duration of the Diploma Programme is 18 months. Participants can undertake the M.Ed programme over a period of up to 5 years, according to their individual circumstances.

The programme is workbased and participants on the Diploma programme are required to have a minimum of 17 hours experience per week (paid or unpaid) on which to draw for learning purposes. This practice is drawn upon throughout the programme for learning activities, formative and summative assessment, including observation of practice. Of the courses within the programme, three, with a combined value of 60 credits (i.e. 50% of the Diploma programme), are directly focussed on practice. To achieve these courses, students are required to undertake an assessment task in their practice and provide evidence of a relevant range of effective practice related to the identified CLD competences. In addition, students on the Diploma programme build a portfolio of evidence to demonstrate that their practice for the duration of the programme has included experience of the three strands of CLD work - youth work, adult learning and community capacity building – and addressed all the CLD competences.

**Principles of CLD**

The programme reflects the values and principles of CLD in design and delivery.

Self-determination

The programme values the experience that each student brings with them and supports them to identify how this experience is to be developed within the structure of the programme. Initial self-evaluation prompts students to plan their learning on the programme with the support of their individual mentor. Assessment tasks throughout the programme are generic and must be reframed by students into a task relevant to their own interests, identified developmental goals and the current challenges of their practice context. The programmes (both the Diploma and M.Ed) culminate in an extended individual research project, the focus and method of which is determined by the student themselves.

Inclusion

This value is at the heart of the programme and manifest in a variety of ways such as:

Entry to the programme can be given to practitioners without formal academic qualifications at degree level, where they are able to evidence appropriate professional learning and capability to study at postgraduate level. A number of students were admitted to the previous programme on the basis of recognition of prior learning (RPL), evidence of professional experience and capability to study at postgraduate level. They were highly successful.

The assessment profile across the programme allows students different kinds of opportunities to demonstrate knowledge, understanding and skills. Assessments take a variety of forms and are not restricted to formal academic writing. This approach was positively acknowledged in student evaluations of the previous programme as allowing students with different strengths to present their knowledge and understanding in different forms.

*Students emphasised the usefulness of assessment tasks and were positive about the benefits of the wider variety of types of assessment. Students reported that the more practical assessment tasks were relevant to and ‘validated’ practice. Some students identified themselves as having struggled in the past with more traditional forms of academic assessment and felt that they had benefited from an alternative approach.* (PG Dip CLD Evaluation Report January 2012)

Throughout the programme teaching takes account of different forms of knowledge and acknowledges and values the diversity of participant experience and abilities. Creativity will be a strong thread through the new programme creating richer opportunities to approach learning in a variety of ways.

At application stage, participants are given the opportunity to identify any specific learning support needs. If they do so, they are put in touch with student support services at University level who will also work with the programme team to adapt teaching, learning and assessment to individual needs. For more information see A WEE MAGICAL WEBSITE

The University’s vision is to strive to create an inclusive culture which celebrates the diversity of the University’s staff and students. It recognises that this diversity brings new and engaging perspectives and enriches the experience of all who work, study and visit the University. Equality and Diversity issues relating to both staff and students are the responsibility of the University Court and are given high priority throughout the University. *Links were provided to the wee magical website but have been removed.*

For example, the University of Far Far Away adopts a zero tolerance approach to racist behaviour as outlined in the anti-racist policy in which the commitment to the equal treatment of all persons regardless of their race, ethnic or national origin or colour is affirmed. The policy sets out the University’s commitment to eliminate racial discrimination, promote equal opportunities and promote good race relations between persons of different racial groups. A copy of the University’s race equality policy can be accessed at *Links were provided to the wee magical website but have been removed.*  and the procedures for dealing with complaints of racial discrimination can be accessed at *Links were provided to the wee magical website but have been removed.*

Empowerment

The concept of professionalism that the programme draws upon is ‘activist professionalism’ (Sachs, 2003). Throughout, participants are engaged with current issues within the field of CLD, CLD Land education and national and international politics. They are encouraged to consider ways in which they can individually and/or collectively influence issues, as professionals. For example, with the last group, one workshop at a study block focussed on a discussion of the consultation on the CLD strategy, following which links were added to the group’s online space to places to respond to the consultation. As a result of group discussion of the CLD Code of Ethics, one student has undertaken an exploration of the Code of Ethics in practice as their final independent project.

As *students* their experience is valued and provides sources of insight into how the programme can be improved. There are several informal and formal ways of them sharing their thoughts and ideas with us. Tutors welcome contact at any time and participants are encouraged to bring ideas, issues, or concerns to the attention of tutors as they arise. Each course is supported by an online discussion space which contains a place for posting questions about problems with the course or with the technologies.

We also offer an opportunity to join in an online evaluation discussion towards the end of each course as a way of getting a shared sense of what has worked well and what we might change. These discussions are unique to each learning group and allow the group to fine tune the learning activities and arrangements as far as possible to suit their circumstances and interests.

A University-wide Student Course Evaluation Form (SCEF) is used to seek participants’ views on the quality of the teaching and learning experience afforded by a particular course. A Student Representative is elected to sit on the Programme Planning Committee.

Working collaboratively

As noted above, the programme evolved out of partnership collaboration and continues to develop as a partnership project. Partners contribute to planning, teaching and evaluation. Mentors who support individual participants are from a variety of agencies and also contribute to learning and teaching activities. Collaborative working provides richer experiences for participants to experience current practice. For example, in the previous programme opportunities for project visits were arranged with a variety of local partners including Family Learning, Station House Media Unit, Westhill Men's Shed, Seaton Hut, The Backies Project.

The learning and teaching approach is collaborative requiring participants to collaborate on programme activities; peer assessment develops participants’ capacities to support but also challenge one another. Participants are also encouraged to provide reciprocal opportunities to experience practice in their different contexts.

A number of innovative collaborations are proposed for the new programme. The programme team will work with the School of Clever People Creative Catalysts, Paul Gorman and Katherine Morley, as part of the Ring project, to embed creativity across the programme curriculum. As part of the Creative Network, Far Far Away City Creative Learning Team will contribute to the programme with workshops and online creative conversations. There will be collaboration with the teaching staff at the Intergalactic Space College whose CLD programmes are also validated by the University of Far Far Away. Discussions to identify and progress synergies across the two programmes have identified joint online learning, creativity in CLD, and collaborative research as areas we will work together on. Discussions are also ongoing with Another University about potential synergies between our postgraduate programmes, building on the recent successful collaboration on a new undergraduate course in family learning. We hope to introduce joint postgraduate courses which would provide greater choice to students on the M.Ed CLD.

Promotion of lifelong learning

Professional development is conceptualised as an ongoing and self-directed process. For the duration of the programme and beyond, participants are signposted to other learning opportunities, to mechanisms for keeping in touch with CPD opportunities and to opportunities for progression. At the final stages of the programme, individuals are required to identify their next steps for learning.

The principles of critical reflection and commitment to support social change and social justice are overt in all aspects of the programme. A strong feature of the new programme will be on arts for social transformation, working with the Far Far Away City Creative Learning Team and the School of Clever People’s Creative Catalysts. The programme team are themselves critically reflective professionals, who contribute to practice at national level, specifically through membership of the CLD Standards Council, and are active in relevant research and publication.

**Sustainability and viability of the programme**

The previous programme was successfully sustained over a period of 5 years despite fluctuations in student numbers and staff changes. The question of how to sustain the programme for the future and to consistently achieve more viable numbers has been addressed in a number of ways. Information has been sought from partners about local employment patterns and professional development priorities. Information about the structures of services related to community planning, including the role of community planning staff and the closer collaboration of education, culture and sport, has been helpful in proposing a wider market for the programmes, specifically reaching out to community planning staff, arts and sports development workers. This has been followed up with information from Far Far Away City Creative Learning team about their team structures, priorities and CPD interests. Information from the Farthest Reaches Alliance has been used to establish the relevance of courses within the programmes as CPD for qualified staff (Scoping Study: CPD for CLD Workers in the North of CLD Land, Al Bishawi and Mcardle, 2013). This has led to the new design in which courses within the programme will be offered as online learning opportunities to qualified staff.

Internally, sustainability and viability have been assessed in relation to University and School priorities, which include a commitment to working across the boundaries of education sectors. CLD is recognised as having a significant place in this commitment to furthering trans-sectoral professionalism particularly in the context of Curriculum for Excellence. Commitment to the programme is evident in the position it has been accorded in the Ring Project as a key strand of the School’s development work in relation to embedding creativity across the curriculum. The Programme Director is a member of the steering group of the Ring project. Knowledge of changes to postgraduate provision at University and School level has been used to assess the possibilities of attracting a wider group of participants to the courses on the programme within individually determined flexible postgraduate programmes, thereby adding to the viability of the M.Ed programme as well as the Diploma programme.

B. Participants

Participants will come from a wide variety of backgrounds and will be experienced in the field. They will be able to meet the demands of study at postgraduate level and will have a relevant degree or equivalent. Participants on the Diploma programme must be working or volunteering 17+ hours per week.

**Selection Processes**

The first stage of application is the completion of an application form. The application form requires information about professional experience as well as previous academic study. A personal statement is helpful in assessing individuals’ suitability, as are the statements of referees. Applicants must provide two references, at least one of which must be work-related and confirm their commitment to work within the field of community learning and development. This documentation is scrutinised by the Programme Director for evidence of motivation to study the programme, experience in CL&D, and commitment to the professional value base. All applicants deemed suitable from the application form are interviewed and will have the opportunity to discuss how their experience might meet the entry requirements. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and credit transfer processes are available to individuals where appropriate. College of Arts and Social Sciences (CASS) procedures for RPL include the appointment of a co-ordinator at School level who will ensure that programme level processes are consistent and fair. The process for the M.Ed CLD will involve applicants bringing forward a portfolio of evidence of prior professional learning to a Professional Conversation. Interviews for applicants for the Diploma programme involve a representative from the CLD partnership as well as a member of academic staff, and questions intended to probe motivation, value base and experience are used to determine the applicant’s commitment to the values and principles of CLD.

**Support**

At University level the Student Learning Service *Links were provided to the wee magical website but have been removed.* helps all students to achieve their full academic potential. They offer free workshops during term-time, individual study advice sessions and online resources. However, in our experience, participants appreciate more specialised support from programme tutors who are committed to working closely with individual participants by a variety of technologically enabled means to help them learn and to demonstrate their learning successfully. Such support is part of the programme ethos and has involved the use of collaborative writing and editing tools and video conferencing facilities such as Skype. Library staff members are also extremely helpful to students, including those studying at a distance, providing support materials, group workshops during study blocks and individual distance support in relation to sourcing and using information.

Each participant undertaking the Diploma programme is assisted to establish a mentor relationship with an experienced CLD professional. Mentors are formally appointed to the University as Honorary Associate Tutors and supported by the programme team following an induction to the programme and their role. Reflective activities undertaken with both the students and the mentors are designed to help the pair negotiate and plan the boundaries and processes of their relationship together. The role requires that mentors visit and observe participants in practice, take part in reflective discussions about practice learning and contribute to reports on practice learning in relation to the competences. Mentors are also important in helping participants identify and negotiate additional extending experiences in order that their practice experience addresses the full range of competences.

**Progression**

Diploma participants are made aware of the opportunity to complete the Masters programme with the Workbased Project course (60 credits). Other ways of continuing their learning are also discussed as part of the final stages of the programme. As the Professional Portfolio will make use of the tools and facilities in i-develop, we hope participants will already be accessing the full range of opportunities afforded them through the CLD Professional Development Framework. Encouragement to do so will be ongoing.

Participants on the M.Ed programme will have ongoing individual guidance to help them plan their route towards completing their Masters.

At all times educational guidance will be offered on the principle of informed neutrality. In other words, staff providing guidance will be well informed about professional development opportunities at local and national level and provide advice on the basis of a best fit with individual interests and circumstances. Progression at the University of Far Far Away may not always be the most appropriate route.

**C. Content**

**Learning Outcomes**

The Learning Outcomes of the programme relate directly to the seven CLD competences (see above). Whilst all courses are considered relevant to all competences and learning is cumulative, each course within the PG Dip CLD is explicitly related to specific competences and seeks to develop and assess knowledge, understanding and experience related to these. (See course descriptors.)

**Learning and Teaching**

The philosophy of the programme is to encourage activist professionalism (Sachs, 2003) and critically reflexive practice. Learning is understood as socially constructivist and professional learning as situated (Wenger, 1998) in networks of power relations (Felsted et al, 2005). A critical pedagogy (Giroux & McLaren, 1987) underpins the approach in which transmissive teaching is rejected in favour of the facilitation of critical enquiry. The spirit of collaborative enquiry informs all aspects of teaching and learning. Enquiry includes the decoding and deconstruction of accepted practices and the examination of ideological assumptions. Theoretical perspectives are not regarded as recipes for practice but as tools for thinking. There is a focus not merely on *how* to practice but always on an analysis of the purposes of practice and the political contexts by which these are framed. Practice is examined as inevitably containing implicit theory and theory as socially contingent. The aim of the pedagogy is to foster political and sociological understandings towards praxis. An important part of this is setting current local practices in the bigger historical and socio-cultural picture. An emphasis on power, as appropriate within a critical pedagogy, permeates the programme. The model of critical reflection used is Brookfield’s 4 lenses (Brookfield, 1995). Brookfield proposes four lenses that can be engaged by educators in a process of critical reflection: (1) the autobiographical, (2) the clients' eyes, (3) our colleagues' experiences, and (4) theoretical and research literature. The four lenses are explicitly used throughout the programme in group activities, and assessments require students to synthesise reflection from these four perspectives. Overall, the approach aims to be provocative and will acknowledge that to be ‘unsettled’ is a natural and important part of the learning process.

An innovative element of the new design will be a golden thread of creativity to be supported by Creative Catalysts Paul Gorman and Katherine Morley as part of the Ring Project at the School of Clever People. Creativity is now recognised to be a significant dimension of transformative education and is seen as an important aspect of Curriculum for Excellence. *Links were provided to the wee magical website but have been removed.* Education professionals, it is suggested, require to be creative as well as critical thinkers (Teaching Scotland’s Future). There is a long tradition of arts and creative approaches to adult and community education internationally and within CLD Land itself. Critical pedagogies exploit creative approaches such as image making, forum theatre, mural and sculpture making. Several students on the previous Diploma Programme came from an Arts or Design background and most use arts approaches within their work. (One student is currently working on research into the relationship between design and youth work.) In local practice, according to our partners, CLD and culture services are working together more closely, including on self-evaluation processes. As part of the Resonate Project, then, we have an exciting opportunity to acknowledge the significance of creativity and arts in community work and bring these explicitly to all aspects of our curriculum. Working with the programme team, the Creative Catalysts will bring examples from the current landscape of community arts practice, support a series of ‘creative provocations’ and instigate radical artistic interventions or events. The Creative Learning Team of Far Far Away City will also contribute to the programme with creative conversations online and optional creative workshops.

A broad concept of professional development is used, congruent with the CPD Strategy for CLD, and students are encouraged to reflect on how they are continually learning as professionals through a variety of informal and formal mechanisms (Cheetham and Chivers, 2001). Learning activities structured within the programme seek to exploit this variety of mechanisms for professional development. For example, modelling, observation, peer teaching for learning are a deliberate part of the activities of the programme. Assessment tasks are the main vehicle for development and require students to synthesise: knowledge and understanding of theory, critical reflection on values and principles of practice, reflexive process.

First and foremost, the approach is to develop a community of enquiry (Lipman, 2003) with a culture of trust and challenge. For this reason, the group approach, which has served so well within the previous programme, will be retained for the new PG Dip CLD programme whilst parts of the experience will be enriched with the participation of other learners online. This will mean that qualifying students on the PG Dip CLD will continue to have a group experience with frequent study blocks of 3 days’ duration in Far Far Away (see attached programme timetable). The study blocks have been highly valued as a transformative ‘third space’ (Skerrett, 2010) where discourses of practice intersect with academic discourses; a space outwith a work context in which students can share and critically reflect on the diversity of their experience. This time together, when there is an emphasis on nurturing group relationships, builds trust and reciprocity and the ability to return to individual practice contexts with broader perspectives. Workshops employ a range of participative methods, involve creative approaches and include contributions from partners and mentors. For example, workshops on self evaluation and on intergenerational issues were contributed by local partners in 2012-13.

As students are dispersed in practice, online facilities are significant in sustaining the community in periods between study blocks. Online distance learning approaches at the School of Clever People, and within the CLD programmes in particular, were noted in the University Internal Teaching Review (2013) as at the forefront of pedagogical practice. Nevertheless, they are not without challenges and approaches have continuously developed over the lifetime of the previous programme, in response to student feedback and the emergence of new technologies. Currently, the programme makes use of both MyFAR FAR AWAY - the University’s Virtual Learning Environment - and google+ which provides a more social networking type of facility. Google has good tools for collaborative working in googledrive and the ‘hangout’ tool has proved particularly useful for online tutorials. The programme team’s approach is to continue to work with groups to select the most effective technologies to meet the educational purposes. Online participation has increased significantly from 2008 to 2013 but does not merit complacency. This dimension of the programme is one we actively work on continuously with students and in our own enquiries, drawing on current research and theory of e-learning. Recent experience of developing MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses), as part of a Knowledge Transfer Partnership with the Farthest Reaches Alliance also informs the evolution of our approaches.

The online learning dimension of the programme will feature significant changes in the new design both to respond to feedback and to facilitate a balancing of the PG Dip CLD group identity with open collaborative participation. The PG Dip CLD community will have a google+ community space of their own for the duration of their programme. They will be given an induction to this environment at the first study block and we will develop confidence to make use of the collaborative tools such as the drive and hangouts. Group tasks will require the use of these tools and there will be regular online peer support sessions scheduled between study blocks. This group will also be encouraged to make us of i-develop, and in particular will use the profiling tool for self evaluation processes and to support the development of an online portfolio to demonstrate that they have addressed all the competences.

Individual courses within the programme will draw from the experience of developing MOOCs and use a format based on these. An individual course space will be established in which learning materials and activities related to the course learning outcomes are shared. These will be the media for learning in relation to specific courses for the students on the PG Dip CLD. However, these courses will also be open to participants outwith the PG Dip qualifying group; participation in these online courses could contribute to study on the M.Ed CLD programme or other postgraduate programmes at University of Far Far Away for already qualified professional workers, provide one-off CPD opportunities for practitioners in a range of settings or contribute to learning for the accredited programme offered by the Intergalactic Space College. As part of the ISC PG Dip course, *Principles and Practices of CLD*, students will be given access to the online Far Far Away University courses, if they wish. In this way, we hope to foster enriched online experiences for professionals with different backgrounds and levels of experience and diverse contexts and settings learning together towards varied learning goals.

**D. Stucture**

(Please refer to attached programme map and mapping of courses to competences in Appendix 1 of this document)

All courses within the programme(s) are

* part time
* workbased
* involves online learning.

**The PG Dip CLD** programme consists of 5 courses, which are normally completed by all students in the same pattern as part of a deliberately cumulative experience over 18 months. In the first phase the course *Enquiring Professionalism (EP)* runs parallel to a series of 3 practice-related courses: *Planning in Partnership with Communities, Ethical Relationships in Practice, Changing Practices in Community Work*. At the end of this phase students bring forward a portfolio of evidence demonstrating how they have addressed all the CLD competences. The second phase of the programme entails students undertaking practitioner action research to achieve the 30 credit course *Enquiring into Practice in Community Settings* for which they have prepared through the EP course.

Participants on the **M.Ed** programme who are not following the programme of professional qualification will have more flexibility. They will be able to negotiate their own pattern of participation in online courses and choose from a wider range of postgraduate options at the School of Education. In order to achieve the M.Ed CLD, all courses must be relevant to CLD and contextualised in CLD practice. All participants must include the course *Changing Practices in Community Work,* and a course relating to professional enquiry, and conclude their programme with the 60 credit Workbased Project course.

Each 15 credit module assumes 150 hours notional student effort which consists of group and individual tasks, online participation and personal study, supported by course tutors.

**E. Staff**

Core staff who teach on the programme are members of the CLD Standards Council and have relevant higher degrees. They have extensive professional experience of CLD and are active locally and nationally in the field and as researchers. (3 relevant staff CV’s were provided and can be taken as meeting the standard) Whilst they contribute deep specialist knowledge of, for example, practitioner action research, adult learning and adult literacies, youth work, online learning and professional learning, they all have a breadth of knowledge, understanding and experience of pedagogies of adult, community and professional learning. The team meet regularly for reflective discussions to support one another’s learning. Staff development in relation to creativity will be a feature of the next academic year through the Ring Project. As well as joint working with creative and arts practitioners, this will involve a series of CPD events and regular discussion groups. A staff appraisal system operates for all staff at the University *Links were provided to the wee magical website but have been removed.*

Additional staff members who will contribute to the programme bring a range of recent experience, such as in community arts projects (CVs were attached and were acceptable) Current professional experience is also provided by partners and mentors. All staff recruited to contribute to the programme are selected on the basis of their professional as well as academic experience.

Mentors are recruited to their role on the programme in negotiation with students and partners and must have a professional qualification in CLD and extensive professional experience of a minimum of 2 years post-qualifying. Experience of supporting practice learning is also an expectation. Face to face induction to the role and a mentor handbook are provided as well as ongoing support by telephone, online communication and a dedicated mentor discussion forum. Mentors are formally appointed to the University as Honorary Associate Tutors, with a range of benefits such as library membership. Mentors have an option to undertake accredited CPD in relation to their role through the Supporting Professional Learning in Practice course offered by the School of Clever People at the University of Far Far Away. To date this option has had limited uptake due to funding issues for employees in CLD. We hope that the higher profile of CPD within CLD as a result of the CLD Standards Council will change this situation in future. A recent meeting facilitated by the CLD Standards Council in relation to practice learning identified the need for national developments for CPD in relation to fieldwork support and supervision. The Programme team will continue to be part of national discussions to progress this and will support access to such professional development for mentors contributing to this programme.

Mentors are required to observe students in practice on at least 3 occasions and to contribute to reports on practice against the CLD competences. They are also invited to contribute to other programme assessment processes such as the professional conversations at which students present their completed competences portfolio. This involvement has been highly valued by mentors who have contributed in this way to the previous programme. Local partners, through the partnership group, have identified the value to employers of mentors’ involvement in the teaching, learning and assessment of the programme and recognise their involvement as having considerable worth as professional development. This is evidenced through the Evaluation report (2012) and minutes of partnership meetings which will be available to the Approval Panel.

A Practice Report is also sought from line managers who are provided with written guidance and invited to attend a line managers’ briefing.

**F. Assessment**

Assessments on the programme are designed to be directly relevant to practice and to encourage students to use practice concerns and challenges as the basis of their work. The assessment profile across the programme is deliberately varied to allow students

to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and capabilities in different ways but also to elaborate their presentation and communication skills, particularly in the use of multimedia approaches. Student feedback has indicated that the opportunity to present their work in different forms is important to both equality of opportunity to achieve the highest standards as well as the development of digital media skills.

Assessment consists of both formative and summative assessment. Formative feedback from course tutors and peers assist students to draw together what is needed for the summative assessment.

Each course within the programme is individually assessed through an assignment task or tasks (for details of individual course assessments, see course descriptors). Assessment criteria include general criteria applicable to all assessments within the programme. All assignments must demonstrate:

1. Critical evaluation and application of advanced professional knowledge and understanding;
2. Commitment to critical self evaluation and development;
3. Enhanced and highly effective professional performance;
4. Personal and professional commitment to an extended professional role and wider professional vision;
5. Advocacy of change and professional action aimed at the development and improvement of practice;
6. Development of professional values and knowledge through reflective and evidence based practice;
7. Working with others to bring about change and improvement to practice;
8. Bridging theory and practice and critically applying and challenging research findings.

There are also task specific criteria as intimated on the course descriptor. Assessments are graded on the University of Far Far Away’s Common Assessment Scale (CAS) (appendix to course descriptors). Students who fail to achieve a pass grade of 9 or above on the CAS scale may resubmit the assignment once more within that academic year. Some assessments include formative and peer feedback. Final tutor feedback is provided in written form with clear developmental points to support the student to strengthen their work. Comments will aim to offer informative summative feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of the work submitted and formative advice, where appropriate, on how course and assessment activities might be tackled in the future. Feedback is normally provided within a 4 week period. Students requiring to resubmit work are supported on an individual basis by the course tutor.

The University recognises that the provision of timely and appropriate feedback on assessment plays a key part in students learning and teaching. The guiding principles for the provision of feedback within the University are detailed in the Institutional Framework for the Provision of Feedback on Assessment available at: *Links were provided to the wee magical website but have been removed.*

Further details about assessment, progress, regulations and various policies and procedures are provided in Plagiarism and the Code of Practice (Postgraduate Taught Students) available at: *Links were provided to the wee magical website but have been removed.*

**PG Dip CLD assessment of practice**

Assessment of practice for students on the qualifying programme is by means of a Portfolio of evidence of practice relating to the competences and a Professional Conversation. The portfolio must include:

* An initial self-evaluation against the competences
* A plan for how the student will strengthen identified aspects of practice and extend their experience
* At least 3 reports of observed practice signed by the student’s mentor
* A report by the line manager detailing developments in the practitioner’s competent practice.
* Evidence of a range of relevant practice including youth work, adult learning and community capacity building, and demonstrating collaborative working
* Reflection on professional development processes and outcomes

The three practice reports are scheduled at interim points in the programme and each must focus on a different aspect of CLD practice identified by the student and their mentor as areas for individual development. The reports should be the result of a reflective dialogue between the student and their mentor/line manager and are shared with the Programme Director who will liaise with the mentor and the student to discuss progress in practice towards individuals’ development goals. Where there is any cause for concern a meeting is held between the Programme Director, the student and the mentor to discuss strategies to facilitate student progress.

In the new programme, the portfolio will make use of the self evaluation and profiling tools within i-develop. Students are however encouraged to be creative about the production of their portfolio, usually arranging it according to a personal theme. This portfolio is shared with programme tutors and a mentor on the programme (not the student’s own) who then schedule a Professional Conversation to assess whether competence has been evidenced. The effectiveness of this approach to assessment was noted by the External Examiner:

‘*In particular I commend the work undertaken through the production of portfolios that demonstrated a strong evidence base which was apt, varied and imaginative*.’ (External Examiner, 2011)

Mentors who take part in the Conversations are also generally very impressed by the students’ work:

*‘I would also like to comment that all the students I met showed an increased confidence and self awareness in becoming professionals within the field of CLD. Each showed a passion and commitment for their communities. It was really nice to meet the students and learn about the fantastic practice that is going on across CLD Land in CLD.’ (Student Mentor, 2013)*

All final assessment decisions reside with the University academic staff although the role of mentors as Associate Tutors is highly valued and is especially important in the Professional Conversations. Written guidance about their role in reporting on and formatively assessing practice is provided to mentors in the mentor handbook.

All students are given information about the University Appeals Procedures *Links were provided to the wee magical website but have been removed.*

**Awards and Classifications**

To achieve the Award of PG Dip CLD, students must achieve a pass grade in all courses AND a pass for the Professional Portfolio.

The University’s Grade Spectrum will be used to determine awards with commendations or distinctions and the common framework of CAS Band Descriptors (see CAS Scale) applied to facilitate such determinations.

1. The award of a degree with distinction will be associated normally with work assessed to be of an outstanding standard in 90 credits or more, including the dissertation or work-based project, and with work assessed to be of a very good standard or better in 120 credits.

2. The award of a degree with a commendation will be associated normally with work assessed to be of a very good standard or better in 120 credits or more, including the dissertation or work-based project.

3. The award of a diploma with distinction will be associated normally with work assessed to be of an outstanding standard in 60 credits or more and with work assessed to be of a very good standard or better in 90 credits in total.

4. The award of a diploma with a commendation will be associated normally with work assessed to be of a very good standard in 90 credits or more.

Individual awards are confirmed by the Examination Board.

**G. Support**

The blended programmes involve group workshops at the University and online learning.

Workshops at the University take place in the teaching accommodation of the Princess College. Sessions are timetabled in appropriate sized teaching rooms which have access to a range of teaching technologies. Additional equipment is available through IT services, such as laptops, digital cameras, flip cameras, audio recorders. These are booked in advance for use by students for collaborative group activities. IT suites are also used at times, specifically for inductions to the online environments for distance learning. A wide variety of other resources are provided, such as art materials, when appropriate to group activities.

Online learning makes use of a variety of environments and collaborative tools. The University’s Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) – MyFARFARAWAY -provides a range of facilities for access to learning materials, discussion and collaborative working (currently Collaborate). A social networking environment is also established within google+ where a wider range of collaborative tools facilitate sharing and collaboration. Students are supported to develop confidence in using these tools and to reflect on their potential for use in work with communities.

Library support is provided to distance learning students by dedicated staff at the University Library who provide library workshops as part of the study sessions at the university as well as online resources and individual support in relation to accessing and using information. Increasingly programme texts and information are available online through online journals and ebrary. Library support is consistently rated highly by students in programme evaluation. Where students are studying at a distance and access to another institution’s library facilities would be beneficial, this can usually be arranged.

When students are required to make project visits, transport costs (where they exceed normal expectations) can be met from programme funds. All travelling expenses for mentors or partners contributing to the programme at the University are reimbursed.

Staff teaching on the programme are supported by the School of Clever People to participate in relevant national organisations, networks and professional development. An annual process of professional review requires staff to identify professional development priorities in relation to their work, which are funded from the School of Clever People’s staff development budget.

The programme is supported by a Programme Administrator.

**H. Monitoring and Evaluation**

This programme was developed from a partnership between the University and local CLD managers. It is overseen by a partnership group which consists of representatives from local authorities and the Voluntary Sector and includes a student representative. The group meets at three monthly intervals and considers feedback from practice contexts as well as from students and workbased mentors. Meetings are minuted. In the lifetime of the previous programme, this group have commissioned two extensive evaluations –at the end of the first cohort and with the second cohort.

The first evaluation involved a review of the programme documentation, the virtual learning environment (VLE) and a reflective activity with partnership group. There was a focus group with Practice Tutors and individual telephone interviews with Line Managers, HE Tutors and students (including one student who withdrew from the programme). The second evaluation was conducted by postal questionnaire followed up by telephone interviews with a sample of students. 18 students completed the programme, of whom, 10 returned questionnaires. 4 telephone interviews were conducted.

A formal evaluation report was returned to and discussed at the Partnership group in both cases.

Throughout the life of the programme, feedback has been routinely sought from students via the Student Course Evaluation Form (SCEF) and through the student representative. At each study block students are given time on their own on the final day to discuss their experience and prepare feedback to tutors.

The Programme is managed by a Programme Director who reports to the School of Clever People’s Graduate Committee, which in turn reports to the College of Arts and Social Sciences Graduate Committee. The University Committee on Teaching and Learning and the Postgraduate Academic Standards Committee monitor programmes of study and the manner in which they are taught and assessed. *Links were provided to the wee magical website but have been removed.*

The programme was subject to a University Internal teaching Review in academic year 2012 -2013. The programme review report provides details of views sought from managers, practitioners, mentors, students and employers as well as programme amendments in response to these views. It will be available to the panel at the Approval Event.

External Examiner reports for 2009, 2010 and 2011 are available.

An External Examiner is sought from suitably qualified academic staff with extensive professional experience of the CLD sector. Personal recommendations are used to identify suitable individuals to approach. The programme Director will first contact individuals informally to confirm that they would be willing to take on the role. External examiners are appointed by the University Court specifically to ensure that standards are maintained on a comparable level with universities throughout the UK and that the system of assessment is seen to be transparent and fair to all students. The University has criteria for the appointment of external examiners, in line with those of the national criteria, and once nominated by the Programme Director they must be approved by the Vice-Principal (Learning and Teaching), Academic Services will then contact the nominee for details of their right to be employed in the UK (a UKBA regulation). When details regarding the right to be employed in the UK are received, Academic Services send an appointment letter to the external examiner, together with information on the role. Details of the External Examiner are provided to students in the Programme Handbook.

The Boards of Examiners normally meets once per year in June. At these meetings the proposed results lists are confirmed for all completed courses and the award of Certificates and Diplomas will be confirmed for all who have successfully completed the appropriate requirements. The failing work of any participant will also be considered at this time.

The University’s appeals and complaints procedures provide students with a framework through which to formalise their concerns about aspects of their academic experience or to complain when they feel that standards of non-academic service have fallen short of that which they expected. The process has been designed to make the appeals and complaints process as accessible and simple as possible and to provide a robust, fair mechanism through which to ensure that all appeals and complaints are considered in the appropriate way at the appropriate level. A major feature of the process is the emphasis it places on early or informal resolution. There is an expectation that students will take responsibility for seeking resolution of their academic or non-academic concerns by raising and discussing them at the earliest possible stage with the relevant individuals in an academic School or administrative Service. Further details of the processes for making an appeal or complaint, including where to find further help and support in the process, is given at: *Links were provided to the wee magical website but have been removed.*

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Appendix 1

Competences mapped to courses in PG Dip CLD

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Enquiring Professionalism | Planning in Partnership with Communities | Ethical Relationships in Practice | Changing Practices in Community Work | Enquiring into Practice in Community Settings |
| Know and understand the community in which we work |  |  |  |  |  |
| Build and maintain relationships with individuals and groups |  |  |  |  |  |
| Provide Learning and Development Opportunities in a Range of Contexts |  |  |  |  |  |
| Facilitate and promote community empowerment |  |  |  |  |  |
| Organise and manage resources |  |  |  |  |  |
| Develop and support collaborative  Working |  |  |  |  |  |
| Evaluate and inform practice |  |  |  |  |  |