



UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE SCHOLARSHIPS

2012: 1 Research Masters Bursary

RESEARCH PROJECT: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, INNOVATION AND HIGHER EDUCATION PROVISION

Preamble

The University of the Western Cape (UWC) and the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) have established a research partnership to investigate **Professional Development, Innovation and Higher Education Provision** within the framework of Lifelong Learning and National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs). As part of this partnership, 1 Masters Scholarship is being provided for 1 full time student to participate in the UWC / SAQA research project (**see details below Appendix 1**). Particular areas of expertise and interest needed are:

- Innovative pedagogy in higher education, especially flexible provision
- Workplace learning
- Adult learning / lifelong learning
- Action research

Applicants interested to enroll for a full-time Research Masters starting in 2012 are invited to apply.

Value of the Scholarships

Level of Study	Scholarship Value (per annum)	Period of Support (years)
Masters	R 90 000	2*

***Renewal is subject to satisfactory progress and availability of funds**

Scholarship-holders will be expected to participate in the research project located within the Division for Lifelong Learning at UWC, will be registered at UWC and will be supervised by the principal investigator, Professor Shirley Walters.

Scholarship eligibility criteria

- Scholarship is awarded on the basis that student is a full-time student from 2012.
- Applicants must ensure that their research falls within the research area specified.
- The scholarship-holder may not hold full-time salaried employment.
- Applicants must normally have attained an excellent record in their honors or equivalent degree
- Renewal of scholarship for each academic year is subject to satisfactory progress.
- Successful student will be required to enter into a signed scholarship agreement with UWC

- If a scholarship-holder does not obtain the degree for which the scholarship was awarded within the prescribed period (two years for Masters); relinquishes his/her studies, or leaves UWC during the period for which the scholarship was awarded, UWC may at its sole discretion require him/her to refund all payments of the scholarship already received for study towards the particular degree.

Application Process

Should you be interested in applying, please submit the following documents to toppel@uwc.ac.za (copied to swalters@uwc.ac.za) with Subject: UWC/SAQA Application 2012. Or deliver it in person to:

Ms Tania Opper
Administrator
Division for Lifelong Learning
UWC
Tel.: 021 9593339

Queries only:

Prof. Shirley Walters
Director: Division for Lifelong Learning
Email: swalters@uwc.ac.za
Tel: 021 959 3339

Required documents

1. An application form (attached)
2. CV (clearly indicating your study field of interest in relation to the research project appended) – maximum one A4-page
3. Copy of your ID document
4. Full official academic record
5. Reference letter from your workplace or previous study supervisor
6. Recognising that the masters research will be within a broader research project (**see Appendix**) and you will not be choosing your area of investigation outside of this, write a description (maximum two A4-pages) outlining your interest in the project, what areas within the project you would like to pursue; what theoretical questions and areas of expertise you bring to the project.

CLOSING DATE: Friday 17 February 2012

Please note: Incomplete and/or late applications will NOT be considered. Note that shortlisted students will be called for an interview time and date to be confirmed.

UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE

APPLICATION FORM: JOINT UWC/SAQA MASTERS SCHOLARSHIP 2012

Surname	
Name(s)	
Nationality	
Country of residence	
Identification number	
Date of birth	
Postal Address	
Physical Address	
E-mail Address	
Telephone number	
Fax number	
Research interest	
Highest qualification (e.g. Hons)	
Student Number (if applicable)	

Details of previous bursaries held:

Name of bursary/scholarship	Amount of bursary/scholarship	Conditions of the bursary/scholarship

I acknowledge that the above information is accurate and I give my consent to the University of the Western Cape to make appropriate enquiries in terms of this application. I understand that this application in no way guarantees that I will receive funding as a result of this application.

Signature _____ Date _____

Appendix 1: LIFELONG LEARNING AND NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORKS

Research Project: Professional Development and Innovation and its Implications for Higher Education Provision

This research project is part of a broader research project into lifelong learning and NQFs. It will focus on: What are the barriers and affordances for learners to be able to inhabit a LLL system? How do the barriers or affordances play out at *policy, institutional, professional or individual levels*, for learners, especially professionals/workers and educators? How do national and institutional policies and practices inhibit or encourage possibilities for LLL? How do professional, work-based practices interface and interpenetrate higher education institutions' abilities for professional development and innovation, or vice versa?

The key research questions which undergird the whole research and development programme on LLL and NQFs are: What does LLL mean? How do we understand the barriers and affordances for learners to be able to inhabit a LLL system? What is the relationship between LLL and the NQF? How does the NQF help or hinder the processes – how are qualifications used by professions, institutions, individuals to aid or impede the LLL ambition? How are different forms of knowledge understood and under what conditions can these be traversed or integrated, or not? How do the barriers or affordances play out at *policy, institutional, professional or individual levels*, for academics, particular professionals/workers and learners?

Professionals continue to be key drivers of innovation at both the economic and social levels, through their development and mobilisation of new knowledge (Cooper and Walters 2009; Abrandt Dahlgren 2010; Billett 2000, 2002, 2004; Boud 2010; Fenwick 2004, 2010; Unwin et al 2007). Concomitantly, professionals across public and private sectors are experiencing major transitions in knowledge, practice and organisation. These two dynamics are linked with professionals' learning, which is making new demands on higher education and work organisations for changes in access, forms and structures of learning support. These are issues of central concern within the national policy environment as articulated through, for example: the NQF, the New Growth Path for South Africa (RSA, Department of Economic Development 2010); the HRD Strategy for South Africa 2010-2030 (RSA, Department of Labour 2009); the National Skills Development Strategy III (RSA, Department of Higher Education and Training 2010); the Performance Agreements signed with the President and the Ministers (RSA, Departments of Public Service and Administration and of Arts and Culture 2010); and the Declaration signed at the National Skills Summit by the social partners representative of the post-school education and training system (RSA, Department of Higher Education and Training 2010).

Professional development, within a lifelong learning framework, occurs throughout professional people's working lives if they are to remain current and be able to provide leadership for new and innovative approaches to social or economic challenges. Professional development takes various forms, i.e. informally 'on the job'; through continuing professional development courses; or through full qualifications and programmes (Olesen 2001, Nerland 2010). This research is focusing more on the latter two forms which occur in the interaction between working people in particular

professions and public higher education institutions. While there are pockets of excellence, South African public higher education institutions are, for the most part, very traditional in their responses to the needs of working students. Their systems are still largely geared to a conception of learning that is for young people, which is residential and full time. **The proposed action research aims to introduce lifelong learning opportunities which are conceptualised and provided in flexible ways, and which challenge both the higher education institutions and workplaces to interrogate understandings and approaches to professional development and so support innovation in order to enhance successful access and success to learning by working people.**

While the proposed research will begin in depth at one university, within initial pilot sites for professional development, it will interact with cognate professional sites at other HEIs nationally, and through international research collaborations, to locate the findings in a variety of national and international contexts. Other public HEI will be invited to participate and collaborate in seminars or workshops at key points in the project. The project is driven by particular local imperatives (DLL 2010) but the ambition is that these goals will influence Lifelong Learning practices nationally and internationally. This possibility is being built into the design through the pilot sites and the research being agreed to at the highest level in the institution, and through building national and international collaborative relationships with colleagues (Daniels et al 2009; Fenwick and Edwards 2010).

Problem Statement

Professional innovation, learning and development is shaped profoundly by the abilities of higher education and training institutions and workplaces to adapt to the changing circumstances within which professionals are located. The inability of HEIs to adapt to providing access to professional development in more flexible ways can have major unintended consequences for the professional development of individuals and groups, and the ability to innovate, and for the country as a whole. Presently, public HEIs are under pressure to increase their intake of young students which can mean that working people or 'nontraditional students' (adults) are finding their options for lifelong learning being limited, including their ability to gain access through recognition of prior learning (RPL). Therefore, this study will focus initially on **key sites of professional development and innovation** through undertaking in-depth action research in one HEI. The findings in the one institutional location will be elaborated and tested through interaction with the relevant professional bodies and other HEIs, nationally and internationally. This will start from Phase 1 and will spiral through all the phases.

Approach

The difficulties that working adults have in accessing higher education has been documented by Buchler, Castle, Osman, and Walters (2007), and more recently by DLL in a research report entitled, *The HEQF and adult learners: But by the grace of champions in Higher Education Institutions? Questions and concerns* (DLL 2010). At UWC, the DLL has been leading discussions in the institution to shift thinking about teaching and learning towards more flexible provision, which problematises notions of 'full-time' / 'part-time', 'working' / 'not working', 'distance' / 'residential', in order to ensure that working people and other adults can continue to access professional development and lifelong learning opportunities.

To state briefly, '*flexible learning and teaching*' have implications for teaching, learning and administration in the institution, which can include issues relating to curriculum, delivery, access, and assessment. They refer to a range of responses to different situations and learners' needs. One of the

most useful definitions we have found comes from Lynne Hunt¹ of the University of Southern Queensland in Australia who says:

...the flexible learning agenda aims to establish a sustainable range of learning opportunities that incorporate technology enhanced learning for all students. Flexibility in learning and teaching practice in a broad sense can include:

- *flexible curriculum design* including flexible forms of assessment which take into account different learning styles of students;
- *flexible admission criteria* including mechanisms such as recognition of prior learning (RPL);
- *flexible delivery* including distance, online, on campus, a mix of these modes as well as accelerated or decelerated options.

There has been agreement on the action research at the highest levels at the University of the Western Cape. In order to identify research sites, faculties have been invited to self-identify which particular professional areas would benefit from engagement in the project, and which would be willing to participate. In response to this invitation, pilot sites are currently being explored and negotiated – three will be chosen – and these are: Library and Information Science (on the scarce and critical skills list through need for archivists, record managers, information managers and librarians in multiple sites SAQA-DHET 2011); Nursing (scarce and critical skill, SAQA-DHET *Ibid.*); Public Administration (scarce and critical skill with need for senior government and local government officials *Ibid.*) and Religion and Theology, including Ethics (scarce and critical skills relating to needs for counselors, social and community workers, which are the roles that many of those doing these courses, are involved in – *Ibid.*). In each of these professional areas, there are important pressures for departments to change the ways in which they deliver their programmes in response to institutional, students and workplace needs and requirements. It needs to be said though that the final choice of sites will be made only when certain criteria are met, which include agreement at institutional and departmental levels; taking into account multiple and sometimes competing needs to address workplace, institutional, students, and national priorities.

The plan is for the UWC to establish project committees for each of the sites; for Masters and Doctoral students to be encouraged through bursary provision and other support to undertake research in to the particular professional sites, working together with the academics in the departments, to form a community of research practice - which could include informal virtual networking nationally and internationally, seminars, and conferences. The research may include:

- studying the political economy of each of the professions in depth;
- in-depth interaction with prospective or current students, many of whom are current employees at a variety of workplaces;
- the design and development of new modes of delivery of certain courses, in response to the findings, and in collaboration with other academics across campus;

¹ Lynne Hunt <http://www.usq.edu.au/learn/teach/topics/flex>

- interaction with workplaces;
- theorising the notions of professional development, innovation, flexibility and lifelong learning;
- understanding the social uses of qualifications and part-qualifications, including continuing professional development within particular professional sites;
- feedback to SAQA on the NQF's impact in particular professional areas;
- feedback to higher education with policy proposals for more effective lifelong learning provision at HEIs;
- proposals to SAQA and professional bodies in relation to qualifications (or part qualifications) in these professions;
- the identification of broad principles that may have import for other professional development and innovation.

Shirley Walters

Division for Lifelong Learning

October 2011