

Scottish Government Initiative to Facilitate an Increase in Masters-Level Learning

Providers of Teacher Professional Learning

12 September 2013

Dear Colleague

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE TO FACILITATE AN INCREASE IN MASTERS-LEVEL LEARNING

I am writing to inform you that with the agreement of the National Implementation Board (NIB) for Teacher Education the Scottish Government is seeking bids for the second phase of the initiative to facilitate an increase in masters-level learning.

As you may be aware around £1.3 million has already been allocated to over 500 teachers who were working towards a masters qualification and had obtained 60 or more credits at SCQF level 11. There remains around £1.7 million available to help increase the amount of masters-level learning by teachers.

The NIB has developed a framework that will allow organisations and organisations working in partnership to develop bids for the provision of learning opportunities for teachers at Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework (SCQF) level 11. Attached at annex A is a set of principles and criteria that should be used in developing bids.

Defining what is masters-level learning will be an important element in developing and considering bids. For the purposes of this initiative both the NIB and the Scottish Government considers masters-level learning as being either learning opportunities accredited at SCQF level 11 or other learning opportunities which meet this level through cognisance with the SCQF.

The Scottish Government would encourage organisations considering a bid to familiarise themselves with the SCQF and in particular the descriptors at level 11 (these are attached at Annex B). The descriptors are fundamental to the framework and describe in broad terms what learners should be able to achieve or demonstrate at a particular level. They are generic in nature and are captured within five characteristics:

- knowledge and understanding;
- practice: applied knowledge, skills and understanding;
- generic cognitive skills;
- communication, ICT and numeracy skills; and
- autonomy, accountability and working with others.

Teachers engaging with the Standard for Career-Long Professional Learning may in many cases be learning at SCQF level 11. The use of professional enquiry by teachers may match many of the descriptors at SCQF level 11. This heightened awareness and experience of SCQF level 11 learning by teachers should be recognised when developing bids.

The timetable for the submission of bids is **Friday 13 December 2013** with decisions made on them no later than Friday 31 January 2014.

I look forward to seeing your innovative bids in due course.

Yours sincerely

RACHEL SUNDERLAND
Head of People and Leadership Unit

ANNEX A

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE TO FACILITATE AN INCREASE IN MASTERS-LEVEL LEARNING

Introduction

1. The following principles and criteria should be used in developing and submitting bids and will also be used by those involved in the consideration of bids.

Principles

2. There needs to be fairness in the process of allocating resources. This will not guarantee a set amount of support for bidding organisations, rather it will ensure that issues such as geographical location, age, sex etc. are not barriers to accessing funding. When developing bids organisations (bids from partnerships of organisations such as local authorities and providers of learning will also be welcomed) may decide to give priority to particular groups of teachers with aspirations to develop their learning in certain areas.

3. These funds should be used to add to the capacity that local authorities and providers are building in respect of high quality teacher education. This initiative should not be seen as replacing the responsibilities of employers but rather adding to the long-term sustainability of masters-level learning. Good value for money needs to be achieved in respect of this expenditure. A supporting contribution from local authorities to the bid should also be considered. This could be either financial, staff time or other non-financial contribution. Local authorities should also consider how they are promoting to their teachers established funding routes for post-graduate learning.

4. Teachers should have access to as wide a range of providers as possible, including providers offering on-line programmes. Bidding organisations should consider working in as wide a partnership as possible to achieve this but will need to demonstrate how teachers will be expected to engage with their employers to ensure that they are properly supported through their learning and that best use is made of that learning. All bids should also be based on learning opportunities that clearly focus on delivering improvements in pupil learning. All bids should be based around learning opportunities that are at Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework (SCQF) level 11.

5. For the purposes of this exercise, masters-level learning should be predominantly practice-based enquiry that is linked to latest academic research. This includes both enquiry based and knowledge based masters programmes that can demonstrate an intended impact on pupil learning. Learning should also be firmly linked to the Standard for Career-Long Professional Learning and involve an element of collaborative working. It is recognised that some teachers will need to adapt to SCQF level 11 learning and this can be achieved through the use of the Standard for Career-Long Professional Learning that progresses their learning through to SCQF level 11. The descriptors for SCQF level 11 cover areas such as working in a peer relationship; critically review, consolidate and extend knowledge,

skills and practice and apply a range of techniques of enquiry (see Annex B). All learning should articulate with SCQF level 11.

6. There is a need to communicate clearly with all teachers about opportunities that will arise from this initiative. Use of both the terms “Masters” and “SCQF level 11” is appropriate when communicating with teachers. Communications should also reference the link between teachers’ current work around the Standard for Career-Long Professional Learning and SCQF level 11.

Criteria

7. **Level of learning** – each bid should be based on SCQF level 11 learning. An assurance that the learning has been checked against that SCQF is needed.

8. **Content/type of masters** – the bids should set out in detail how the learning opportunities will be conducted. This should include how teachers will be supported and how their learning impact will be measured. It is preferable but not always necessary that proposed learning opportunities include academic credit. Where they do include academic credit the bids should outline the assessment process.

9. **Impact/sustainability** – the bids should provide detail as to the expected impact on teacher and pupil learning and how this will be evidenced through local authorities. It should also include how future learning of this type for teachers can be sustained and funded. There will be an expectation that learning and impact from these projects will be shared nationally. Access to data on impact will be required and may be published.

10. **Additionality** – bids should be innovative and avoid the approach used in phase 1 of this initiative that focused on funding individuals through to the completion of a masters qualification.

11. **Costs** – these should be set out in detail and include any other funding contribution or other support being offered by organisations. Bids should include details of any discounts that have been negotiated to fees etc.

12. **Submission of bids** - Bids must be submitted to the Scottish Government and signed-off by senior officers of the organisations involved. The group assessing bids may need to contact bidders for additional information. Bids may be accepted in part with offers of funding reduced accordingly.

Assessment of bids

13. The Scottish Government will established a group to consider bids based on the principles and criteria. This will be chaired by the Scottish Government and look to include colleagues with relevant expertise in SCQF level 11 learning along with colleagues who understand the current educational context. This may include colleagues from universities that do not offer teacher training programmes.

Timetable for initiative

14. Bids need to be submitted by email to scott.brand@scotland.gsi.gov.uk or david.roy@scotland.gsi.gov.uk at the Scottish Government by 4.00 pm on Friday 13 December 2013.

15. Decisions will be made as soon as possible after that and no later than Friday 31 January 2014. This process may involve the Scottish Government requesting further information from bidders.

16. A condition of grant funding will be that the Scottish Government will expect all learning opportunities to have commenced by September 2014.

Scottish Government
Learning Directorate
September 2013

LEVEL 11

The following descriptions are for guidance only – it is not expected that every point will necessarily be covered.

CHARACTERISTIC 1: KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

- Demonstrate and/or work with:
 - Knowledge that covers and integrates most, if not all, of the main areas of the subject/discipline/sector – including their features, boundaries, terminology and conventions.
 - A critical understanding of the principal theories, concepts and principles.
 - A critical understanding of a range of specialised theories, concepts and principles.
 - Extensive, detailed and critical knowledge and understanding in one or more specialisms, much of which is at, or informed by, developments at the forefront.
 - A critical awareness of current issues in a subject/discipline/sector and one or more specialisms.

CHARACTERISTIC 2: PRACTICE: APPLIED KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND UNDERSTANDING

- Apply knowledge, skills and understanding:
 - In using a significant range of the principal professional skills, techniques, practices and/or materials associated with the subject/discipline/sector.
 - In using a range of specialised skills, techniques, practices and/or materials that are at the forefront of, or informed by forefront developments.
 - In applying a range of standard and specialised research and/or equivalent instruments and techniques of enquiry.
 - In planning and executing a significant project of research, investigation or development.
 - In demonstrating originality and/or creativity, including in practices.
 - To practise in a wide and often unpredictable variety of professional level contexts.

CHARACTERISTIC 3: GENERIC COGNITIVE SKILLS

- Apply critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis to forefront issues, or issues that are informed by forefront developments in the subject/discipline/sector.
- Identify, conceptualise and define new and abstract problems and issues.
- Develop original and creative responses to problems and issues.
- Critically review, consolidate and extend knowledge, skills, practices and thinking in a subject/discipline/sector.
- Deal with complex issues and make informed judgements in situations in the absence of complete or consistent data/information.

CHARACTERISTIC 4: COMMUNICATION, ICT AND NUMERACY SKILLS

- Use a wide range of routine skills and a range of advanced and specialised skills as appropriate to a subject/discipline/sector, for example:
 - Communicate, using appropriate methods, to a range of audiences with different levels of knowledge/expertise.
 - Communicate with peers, more senior colleagues and specialists.
 - Use a wide range of ICT applications to support and enhance work at this level and adjust features to suit purpose.
 - Undertake critical evaluations of a wide range of numerical and graphical data.

CHARACTERISTIC 5: AUTONOMY, ACCOUNTABILITY AND WORKING WITH OTHERS

- Exercise substantial autonomy and initiative in professional and equivalent activities.
- Take responsibility for own work and/or significant responsibility for the work of others.
- Take significant responsibility for a range of resources.
- Work in a peer relationship with specialist practitioners.
- Demonstrate leadership and/or initiative and make an identifiable contribution to change and development and/or new thinking.
- Practise in ways which draw on critical reflection on own and others' roles and responsibilities.
- Manage complex ethical and professional issues and make informed judgements on issues not addressed by current professional and/or ethical codes or practices.



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