

Faculty trains top teachers through PGCE

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The Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) programme has opened doors to many students with a Bachelor's degree, such as a BA, a BCom or a BSc degree, who wish to teach.

This one year full-time, professional educational programme that is both innovative and challenging means that students can measure their own personal strength in teaching, while significantly increasing their career opportunities. The programme involves the compilation of a professional development portfolio, while being facilitated by the PGCE lecturers engaging in practice-based learning in schools.

A recent external programme review by a panel of top educationists confirmed the importance of the PGCE programme in the Faculty of Education's vision to deliver more excellent teachers to the system.

The Faculty is looking into strengthening the PGCE programme by building a strong cohesive team, increasing student numbers and persuading more students in their third year of BCom, BSc and BA programmes to enrol for the programme after they have graduated. The aim is also to increase the number of permanent staff members involved in the programme and to optimize staff and student diversity within the programme.

The PGCE programme has consistently been commended for its critical, reflective approach. This approach will continue to be strengthened in the years to come. In 2011, international leaders in education will be invited to participate in the programme in order to open up more international networks for staff and students. In addition, the teaching practice of PGCE students will be integrated with the highly effective operations of the B Ed Teaching practice office.

The success of the PGCE programme also means that the Faculty will continue the rich theoretical depth which has been associated with the programme. Schoolbased mentors will be actively prepared so that they can act as role models to the students. Along with the existing network with schools, strong partnerships with a variety of South African schools will also be sought so that students can gain experience of current-day challenges and models of good educational practices. The methodological and didactic aspects of the PGCE curriculum will receive special attention and the quality of the overall support to students is also in the spotlight.

The Faculty plans to distinguish clearly between the different phases of the programme. In future, the Department of Education Innovation will also be closely involved in curriculum development.

During the course of the programme students participate in interactive learning workshops on the Groenkloof Campus of the University of Pretoria. PGCE students also spend terms at schools where they engage in practice-based learning and the dynamic application of educational theory.

The Funza Lushaka bursary scheme enables 500 students in the Faculty of Education to each receive a bursary of up to R50 000 annually. Priority is currently being given to PGCE students, Early Childhood Education students, Mathematics and Science Education students and students enrolled for African languages. In South Africa, there are 12.3 million learners; 386 600 teachers; 26 292 schools including 1 098 registered independent or private schools. Of these, roughly 6 000 are high schools and the rest are primary schools. In government-funded public schools the average ratio of learners to educators is 32.6 to one. In private schools, it is 17.5 to one.

"The Faculty of Education at the University of Pretoria brings top quality teachers to South Africa through the PGCE programme. We hope to make a huge contribution towards addressing the shortfall of qualified teachers in this country," said Professor Irma Eloff, Dean of the Faculty of Education.

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