

2 November 2010, no. 17

Executive election results

Robin Duff (Burnside High School) has been elected PPTA president for 2011-2012. Robin is currently PPTA senior vice president after serving as president in 2007 and 2008.

In other ballots Doug Clark (Forest View High School) was elected junior vice president, Graeme Bridge (Acquinas College) as the executive member for Thames Valley/Western Bay of Plenty and Jo Hunter (Otago Girls' High School) as the executive member for Otago.

Current president, Kate Gainsford, will become the Senior Vice President.

Proposed changes to university entrance requirement

Have your say

NZQA is seeking feedback about its proposed changes to the UE requirement.

The more input schools and teachers can provide to this important issue the better.

The PPTA executive has already produced a draft submission that members can view by logging in to www.ppta.org.nz.

To make a submission visit the "[Proposed changes to the university entrance \(UE\) requirement](#)" page at NZQA's website.

<http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/about-us/consultations-and-reviews/proposed-changes-to-the-university-entrance-ue-requirement/>

Alternatives to study leave - PPTA advice

Following concerns raised by several branches, PPTA has developed the [Alternatives to study leave](#) document to offer members advice about dealing with proposals to limit/change/abandon senior students' study leave during the last weeks of term four.

Alternatives to Study leave

PPTA advice

October 2010

In what circumstances is it proper and reasonable to keep senior students at school during the final weeks of term four, rather than allow them to take study leave?

Some schools offer a variety of catch-up or support programmes for students at risk of qualification non-completion at this time, either focusing on literacy and numeracy, or more generally on gaining credits needed for an NCEA certificate.

These practices raise large questions about the nature of teaching and assessment and the ways in which schools structure the academic year, as well as questions about what can be reasonably and realistically asked of students and their teachers.

PPTA represents the professional and industrial interests some 18,000 secondary teachers in state secondary, area, manual training and intermediate schools, as well as tutors in community education institutions, alternative education and activity centres, and principals in secondary and area schools. More than 95% of eligible teachers choose to belong to the Association.

PPTA advice on Alternatives to Study leave

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This brief paper reminds members of existing policies and requirements in relation to several factors that need to be considered should a school wish to explore alternatives to senior study leave:

- consultation processes
- the components of valid qualifications systems
- NZQA re-assessment requirements
- Teacher workload advice.

Consultation

When we use the term 'consultation' we do so in the same way as in the PPTA advice on developing timetable policies.¹ This definition of consultation was developed under the Employment Contracts Act 1991. The current employment legislation, the Employment Relations Act 2000, expects good faith behaviour and the development of mutual trust and confidence between the employer and the employees in their employment relationships. This implies mutual responsibility to seek ways to make the working environment operate effectively, which will guide the staff and employer towards agreed outcomes. This includes Justice Goddard's ruling about what constitutes a fair and reasonable consultation process. Should a school wish to make changes that will impact on teachers' timetables and work conditions, there is a natural justice requirement that genuine consultation is undertaken with the branch, and that any resulting changes are implemented with reasonable lead times.²

Valid qualifications systems

A valid qualification system needs to be fair, inclusive, cumulative, clear, motivating, coherent, constructive and manageable. In respect of manageability, "assessment arrangements [should] involve acceptable levels of workload and stress for learners and teachers, and justifiable expenditure for the community." Further, "an appropriate balance needs to be found between the thoroughness of an assessment process, its educational value, and its costs to participants and the wider community."³

Assessment must arise out of a coherent programme of teaching and learning. Any suggestion that students could be offered a compressed teaching programme on a new aspect that was not part of the year's programme in order to allow them to achieve further credits has suggestions of

¹ http://www.ppta.org.nz/index.php/collectiveagreements/cat_view/73-employment-information/90-hours-of-work/88-teaching-time

² <http://www.ppta.org.nz/index.php/collective-agreements/conditions-of-employment/820-endeavour-consultation>

³ Te Tiro Hou. Report of the Qualifications Framework Inquiry. commissioned by PPTA, June 1997, pp 99-100.

‘credit shopping’. Should they agree to develop any type of ‘catch up’ or end of year programmes, schools must take care to ensure that students are given relevant and appropriate programmes of learning and assessment.

NZQA’s further assessment opportunity rules

These are very clear. Up to **one** further assessment opportunity *may* be offered for any standard, if the conditions – including manageability – warrant it. All students must be offered the further opportunity, irrespective of their previous grade, and the conditions must be similar to those offered for the original assessment task. If the latter conditions cannot be met, no further opportunity should be offered.⁴

Teacher workload

There is some evidence that in situations such as those posed by ‘alternatives to study leave’ programmes, teachers may experience an unreasonable workload due to professional and ethical imperatives that drive them to do the best they can for their students.⁵ It is crucial that school systems are reviewed and developed to ensure that staff and students are supported in their teaching, learning and assessment programmes, and that unrealistic expectations are not created.⁶

Organisational arrangements that ‘incentivise’ teachers to give students credit for standards, e.g. so that they are not faced with students returning during study leave, are dangerous.

Schools need to ensure that sufficient time is put in place for departments to review current courses and plan for the upcoming year. Traditionally much of the detailed preparation for the next school year takes place during the second half of term four. Should a school decide, following consultation, to change this practice, other appropriate time needs to be made available for this planning and preparation to take place.

Summary

Before implementing any alternatives to study leave schools must:

- consult
- ensure that any changes comply with good employment practices
- ensure that any alternative programmes offer appropriate teaching and learning to students
- continue to meet NZQA’s assessment requirements.

⁴ <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/qualifications-standards/qualifications/ncea/ncea-rules-and-procedures/secondary-schools/4/4-4-assessment-opportunities-for-internal-assessment>

⁵ Secondary teacher workload study report. ACER 2005. retrieved from: http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/11874/sectchrworkloadstudy.pdf

⁶ Ibid.