



POLICY

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Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Policy

For Ta'allum Schools

Reviewed 2015 - 2016



Approvals

The signatures below certify that this policy has been reviewed and accepted, and demonstrates that the signatories are aware of all the requirements contained herein and are committed to ensuring their provision.

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Reviewed by	Dr. Mohammad Saefan		Education Director	20-12-15
Approved by	Ahmed Al Mannai		CEO	15-12-2015

Amendment Record

This Policy is reviewed to ensure its continuing relevance to the systems and processes that it describes. A record of contextual additions or omissions is given below.

Page no.	Function	Revision	Date

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Taállum Vision, Mission and Motto

Taállum Group's Vision

We aspire towards being a progressive institution of learning experiences by offering a quality education based on an Islamic ethos that aims to serve humanity.

Taállum Group's Mission

To establish premier educational institutions which are committed to a unique brand of holistic education.

Our goal is to help every child to learn and acquire Islamic knowledge alongside building a solid foundation in all academic subjects. This will help them develop and gain true Islamic values and thereby make a valuable, correct moral and social contribution to the community in which they live.

Taállum Group's Motto

"Creative learners today, our future leaders tomorrow"

Purpose

The main purpose of any activity considered to be "Professional Development " is to enhance the skills, knowledge and understanding of the staff (both teaching and non-teaching) employed at Al Maha Academy, in order that they may become more effective contributors towards the stated aims of the Academy.

Continuous

The emphasis here is on "Continuous" Professional Development. This implies that the Academies' Professional Development needs are continually being evaluated and met through a cycle of provision and evaluation. It is important to ensure that the cycle of assessment, evaluation, revision, and review is ongoing and is not finite.

Relevance to all members of the school community

The CPD policy applies to all members of staff. There are a number of basic principles associated with this policy:

- All members of staff are entitled to benefit from the opportunities provided for Continuous Professional Development. (Hereafter referred to as CPD)
- Provision will be often based upon the needs of the Academies as a whole.
- The personal and individual professional needs of the staff should ideally be in line with the academic, social, spiritual needs of the pupils for which they are responsible both directly and indirectly.

Forms of CPD

Clearly, CPD provision will take different forms and the following are accepted as part of a package of professional support for all members of staff:

- Whole staff training days
- End of day training events-weekly events for the whole school
- Department or subject training events
- Job related training events
- External accredited courses and events

Other types

Professional Development programs will include: orientation, induction and on-the-job training, career development and transition programs, internal or external courses, support for undertaking research or project work, support for participation in internal or external governance processes, attendance at conferences or seminars, networking, coaching and mentoring programs.

Cascading to frontline personnel

It is also anticipated that provision should be "*Top Down*" and that this cascading model also implies that whole school events should be cascaded down to Coordinators, Departmental Heads and Year Group leaders to deliver appropriate content and raise expectations.

Training, mentoring and expectation meetings (TME)

This is part of the Academy's policy on meeting with teachers or employees in groups where there is a common denominator. Often this is based upon their status, subjects they teach, or the pupils for whom they are responsible.

These Training, Mentoring, And Expectation Meetings (TME) should be opportunities for line managers to impart their own knowledge, skills and advise individual teachers accordingly. Part of the continued cycle and methodology of support is to provide personnel with one-to-one or small group. This can also take place through a person specific buddy system, or through line management responsibilities.

It is essential that these training, mentoring events are "ring fenced" and teachers and other personnel do not have to make decisions to compete with other activities or events.

Best Practice

It is also an opportunity for relevant coordinators and those with leadership responsibilities to make their expectations clear of **Best Practice** during these events. This can be carried out through modelling of best practice and by showing examples. The key principles should be that individual teachers should aspire to be "excellent and outstanding." However, this is not possible until "**Best Practice**" examples are shown, identified or demonstrated.

Consequently, it is the responsibility of appropriate line managers and group leaders to ensure that there is demonstration of best practice where relevant. (This is part of the Seven Standards for Leaders..... SEC 2007)

This will include the use of:

- artefacts
- documentation
- annotated examples
- pupils work
- photographs

Islamic principles

It is fundamental to Islamic beliefs that it is the duty of everyone to love learning, and desire the acquisition of new knowledge and skills so that they can make a personal contribution to the benefit the pupils within our Academies.

As Allah has created or knowledge, it is the duty of every good Muslim employee to seek this information and knowledge on their own volition. All staff members should show respect for learning. The fact that someone is attending a continuous Professional Development event is to be seen as a commitment to the pupils in the Academy.

Individual members of staff, who have a particular interest in a subject, even outside their professional domain, should also be respected. Individual staff members who are deciding what CPD would best meet their development needs should be commended.

A high priority should be given to teachers and staff who take advantage of opportunities to promote Islamic and Qatari beliefs and values. It is particularly important to "cascade down" to other members of staff who are not aware of such beliefs and values.

Non-Islamic teachers and other personnel should be seen as opportunities to inform, advise and encourage them to fully understand the beliefs and habits of Muslim population within the school.

Similarly, those who are not Muslim should see their tenure at Al Maha Academy as a Professional Development opportunity. They should acquire knowledge about key essential Islamic beliefs, as well as knowledge about the host country in which they are residing. This may enable them to be better placed to work, socialize and engage in a much wider international communities in a multi-faith setting.

Reward and Recognition

Al Maha Academies acknowledge that Professional Development is critical to the achievement of the organization's mission and vision. It is also equally important to the continuous improvement of student learning and quality of teaching. For staff, quality Professional Development is integral to personal job satisfaction, workplace productivity, rewards, and recognition.

Commitment to Professional Development

This is also one of the tenants in the Supreme Education Councils Professional Standards for Teachers (2007). Teachers are encouraged to be reflective thinkers. They should reflect upon their own practices and identify areas for improvement.

Impact on practice in the classroom

It is incumbent on all teachers in particular to ensure that such professional training affects their practice within the classroom or elsewhere. At best, new knowledge should be "transferable." While employee academic excellence is to be praised, it is far more meaningful to ensure that this knowledge will help to raise standards throughout the Academy

Seeking feedback

A strong commitment to Professional Development can also be reflected by individuals being proactive in seeking feedback about their own performance. Whilst there may be external evaluation of teaching and learning in their classrooms, or within the areas of responsibility, they should similarly about this and moderate this against their own judgments' and possibly the judgement of others.

Supporting principles

Al Maha is committed to providing a supportive and rewarding environment for employees and recognizes that the quality, responsiveness and professionalism of its staff is linked to the further development of staff skill and competency.

Al Maha will endeavour to provide employees with:

- The opportunity to plan and develop skills, knowledge and attributes that complement organizational and work unit goals
- The opportunity to participate in career development activities that extend and enhance staff capabilities and capacity for advancement within the organisation
- Equity of access to Professional Development opportunities.

Core function of the Academies

It is recognized that the core function of the Academies is to raise standards of teaching and learning and this is inherent in the Academies mission statements. We would wish all pupils to be highly educated, well-mannered, respectful individuals and citizens as well as members of the Academy community that values high aspirations.

There are a number of essential requirements for successful continuous Professional Development programmes.

- The provision of CPD must be of the highest quality
- We wish to capitalize on existing knowledge and skills of staff, i.e. through the skills directory.

The main purpose of the CPD must be to raise standards of teaching and learning. Individuals pursuing courses which may be good general nature and do not impact on the standards of teaching and learning they themselves find the course valuable, but is questionable whether or not this is effective use of resources, time or money. All activities pertaining to Professional Development training must support learning and development skills teacher in order that this effects on the pupils that they teach or in order for them to fulfil their roles and responsibilities

The quality of teaching is the most significant variable in student outcomes therefore developing individual teacher competence is at the heart of effective Professional Development.

Teachers must be able to:

- Implement learning, teaching and assessment strategies to maximize student learning opportunities
- Develop new ways of working in collaboration with other teachers
- Integrate new techniques and technologies into their practice
- Audit their practices against professional standards and develop a professional learning plan based on individual needs.
- Engage in professional conversations about teaching and learning
- Plan, assess and moderate student work collaboratively
- Work together in planning, implementing and evaluating Academy initiatives.

Academy leaders must:

- Ensure that Professional Development plans take account of the needs of individual teachers and the Academy community and the priorities of the Academy.
- Promote and implement quality professional learning in collaborative and collegial environments
- Ensure access to relevant professional learning and development activities for individuals and groups of employee
- Ensure the effective planning, support, monitoring and implementation of individual Professional Development plans
- Encourage, counsel and help the staff they supervise to identify their learning and career development needs
- Support the individual learning needs of all new staff. In particular, new teachers are entitled to individual, structured, long-term, Academy-based programs of induction.

Staff should ideally:

- Engage in ongoing professional learning throughout their career
- Pursue ongoing professional learning in all aspects of their work
- Critically reflect on their practice and achievements
- Contribute to the professional learning of colleagues by sharing their expertise
- Seek Academy-based and system support to identify learning needs and develop personal professional learning programs.
- Currently there was focus on the components of best practice within the classroom using the agreed classroom observation criteria, weaknesses or deficiencies in delivery can easily be identified on a quantity basis.

Note: CPD coordinators have a responsibility to focus and ensure that there is a precision the type of Program delivered to ameliorate any weaknesses in provision.

Position-specific Professional Development

When the Principal decides that it is necessary for a staff member to acquire a particular skill, to learn specific material or to acquire specific qualifications in order for them to carry out the duties attached to their existing position, the organisation shall be fully responsible for all costs incurred in acquiring that skill, learning and/or qualification and the staff member shall, where necessary, be given permission to attend any such course within working hours.

Non-position-specific Professional Development

In its performance review, procedures the organisation shall in every case, encourage the staff members concerned to explore their available Professional Development options. Where an employee wishes to pursue further education or training but the Principal has not required that person to acquire a particular skill, to learn specific material, or to acquire specific qualifications to carry out the duties attached to their existing position, the organisation shall endeavor to facilitate such education or training through:

- Permitting (at the discretion of the Principal, and taking into account the efficiency of the workplace) any rearrangement of working hours that would assist them

- Permitting (at the discretion of the Principal, and taking into account the efficiency of the workplace) any use by the person of the organisation's equipment or services that would assist them
- Permitting (at the discretion of the Principal, and taking into account the efficiency of the workplace) any annual leave or unpaid leave arrangements that would assist them

Proposals for Professional Development

- Employees shall be encouraged as part of the performance review process to take an active role in their own ongoing professional and career development and to apply their learning to its most effective use.
- Any proposal by an employee for any change in their existing conditions of employment (hours of work, taking of leave, use of equipment, etc.) to facilitate their Professional Development shall be considered by the Principal subject to:
 - The policy of the organisation to encourage such development where possible;
 - The overall training needs and priorities of the organisation;
 - Satisfactory assurances from that person's supervisor that the business of the organisation can be carried on satisfactorily in those circumstances; and equity in the provision of such facilitation between employees.

Any such agreement shall be fully documented in that person's personnel file.

Whole Academy Professional Development Processes

Based upon monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning monitoring data and information from several sources

Needs analysis must meet '*top down and bottom up*'.

Conducting a Needs Analysis

- What are the needs as defined by classroom data?
- What is this based upon?
- How accurate or reliable is the data?
- What are the priorities?

- At what level should these be addressed i.e. whole school or department?

The data from monitoring and evaluation should be moderated against the information available elsewhere i.e. testing data, summative and formative assessments.

Other sources of information: audits and questionnaires

- Leadership team needs
- Recommendations from advisers
- Department needs or priorities
- Individual needs , teachers coordinators
- Subject leaders
- Year Group leaders

'All Professional Development should be about raising the standard of teaching and learning'.

Quality Assurance

It is expected that all CPD whole school sessions, and departmental sessions particularly those with outside trainers and visitors shall be quality assured. This will be using a 1-4, with particular focus on:

- Where the CPD event impacts on standards of teaching and learning.
- Where the CPD event meets the needs of the individual or departmental concern.
- Where the CPD event remedies a particular weakness or quality issue.

Ensuring high-quality continuous Professional Development.

There is substantial research to show that certain types of CPD program are more effective than others:

Long-term plan

This plan also allows individuals or groups of employees to implement what they have learnt and to evaluate its effectiveness. At Al Maha Academy there is now increasing emphasis on how this impacts on standards of teaching and learning in the classroom.

Evaluation

Evaluation of the impact can take place through questionnaire, during the quality assurance session towards the end of the program or session, as well as looking at the classroom teaching and learning data.

Strong clear vision

There is a strong clear vision that values continuous Professional Development across the school, and within teams as well as individuals. This vision is shared, but equally is well supported. There is high priority to the planning, implementation of any CPD program or event. Attendance to these events should be encouraged if not made obligatory.

New skills

When the program identifies key skills and knowledge, which is relevant to individual teachers needs or employee needs. Whilst this is not always possible on a one-to-one basis, at Al Maha Academies, we adopt the policy of "best fit."

New technology and new learning

CPD is also effectively takes into account new technologies, new learning and thinking and the outcomes of any action research. This makes the session or program much more meaningful and is much more efficient and effective as the latest techniques in research findings are considered in the CPD design.

Focus on groups

Successful CPD is focused on small groups or cohorts of teachers. Hence the need to have regular training, mentoring and expectation meetings (TME). There is commonality in the group, and such groups are quite manageable at Al Maha Academies.

Evidence-based

The CPD also needs to be evidenced-based as described above. The evidence also includes the outcomes of any testing or assessment regimes. It is important to ensure that pupil performance data also determines the nature and content of the CPD event or program. The Academy improvement board can be a vehicle for such direction and focus.

Learning and sustained CPD

CPD, which takes account of the participant's previous knowledge and experience, is also more effective. This scaffolding skills and knowledge leads to greater expertise and precision in knowledge acquisition.

Professional learning journals

Whilst this is not a policy at Al Maha Academies at present, professional learning journals can also provide a good focus point for discussion and reflection

Coaching and mentoring

Coaching and mentoring through the regular training mentoring and expectation meetings can also enhance knowledge and skills. Sometimes these events can act as a "motivator" or the incentive cue further research or activity. Coaching teachers or other employees also helps them to identify themselves what they need in terms of learning, and this means that they take control of their own learning. This has a much deeper impact than just "telling"

Lesson observations as a basis

There is also substantial research to show that where lesson observation is a basis for discussion, it can lead to much better standards in teaching and learning. Consequently, line managers, coordinators and other senior members of staff who carry out lesson observations should see the feedback processes a Professional Development opportunity for the teachers concerned.

Modelling

Modelling techniques can also be used at Al Maha Academy through team teaching or observation of peers. Coordinators, Senior Management Team members, year group leaders etc, will have a responsibility to direct less proficient staff to those who are more experienced and competent. Thus, they will be able to observe "best practice" in action. This modelling is often highly effective, particularly where the observed teacher welcomes the dialogue at the end of the observation.

Ethos

Particularly relevant to the current state of the employees at Al Maha Academies is the ethos for CPD. Successful schools have a strong ethos for Professional Development at all levels. This is currently undergoing development through the CPD coordinators in both the girls Academy and the boys Academy through:

- Cambridge University International
- London University Institute of Education. Although these are 'pilot programs', it certainly raises the bar in terms of standards and expectations.