Centre Information

Second Edition 2014
His Majesty
Sultan Qaboos Bin Said
The Specialised Centre for Professional Training of Teachers
Introduction

The development of the Specialised Centre for Professional Training of Teachers has been aligned with the vision of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said, may Allah protect him. This focuses on the importance of sustainable development for the whole population. Future generations will need to be capable of meeting changing National requirements and keeping pace with world developments. His Majesty, may Allah keep him, emphasised the importance of his vision in his speeches delivered during the opening of the fifth period of Oman Council and during the Oman Council annual assembly in 2006. He shed light on the necessity of developing human resources and that this should be a major priority in all plans and programs. His Majesty also affirmed the importance of improving academic effectiveness in the design of training programs for the workplace.

In recognition of the vision, the educational sector and its human resources have gained special attention from His Majesty to a greater extent than any other sector. The Sultanate has Omanised this sector in a very short period. The number of teachers during the academic year 2013/2014 has reached 52,822 and a further 13,422 employees work in administrative and technical jobs related to teaching. Since the 2011/12 academic year,
in recognition of the critical nature of their duties, His Majesty has directed a threefold increase in the budget for professional development of the Ministry of Education workforce. This additional support has been used for the planning and design of training programs to enhance academic performance and develop educational skills. Work has also been undertaken on measuring the educational and teaching impact of professional development.

His Majesty, may the Almighty glorify him, has confirmed that human development, the upgrading of human resources and raising standards of performance are the most fundamental requirements to maintain the achievements in the modern era. The report issued by the United Nations Program of Human Development in 2011 has classified the Sultanate as the country that achieved the fastest progress globally in developing its human resources compared to its situation in 1970.

In his speech delivered to the annual assembly of the Oman Council in 2011, His Majesty described the necessity to conduct a comprehensive assessment of education in the Sultanate to
identify the challenges and to find appropriate mechanisms to overcome them. In addition, His Majesty emphasised in his speech to the annual assembly of the Oman Council for the year 2012, through his noble guidance for those responsible for education, the necessity to review education policies, plans and programs, to prepare a generation that is capable of benefitting from developments in the regional and international arenas. The Ministry of Education has taken account of notable international research including the 2010 report from Mckinsey ‘How the world’s most improved school systems keep getting better’. This states that systems that give attention to the development of teachers from the outset have performed better than other systems. It also concludes that the quality of any education system can be judged by the quality of teachers. The Ministry of Education is working in coordination with the Board of Education to prepare studies on the restructuring of the public education system to meet the needs of the Sultanate and the overall development of the education workforce.

The Ministry of Education, in recognition of the high expectations and the challenges across all aspects of its work, particularly those related to the professional development, has implemented an ambitious National project to improve professional development by establishing a Specialised Centre for Professional Training of Teachers. This centre will improve the performance of teachers, develop their skills and evaluate their performance. It will research new methods and implement them through effective professional development programmes.

The development of the Specialised Centre for Professional Training of Teachers is an integral part of the future vision of the Ministry of Education which includes the establishment of a National Centre for Careers Guidance, a Centre for Educational Evaluation and a National Assessment Centre. The centres aim to attract the best talent and specialist expertise through the degree of independence they will have for administrative and financial affairs.
Committed to our communities
The Specialised Centre for Professional Training of Teachers

Centre Vision

To include teachers as active partners in the development of education, using best international practice, leading to achievement of the highest standards.

Centre Mission

- To train and qualify teachers and educators, to develop pride in their work and to have high levels of skills, self-confidence and motivation.

- To enhance the status of the teaching profession by informing the wider community about the tasks performed by teachers and the importance of their role in the progress of communities.

- To support the process of taking decisions related to national educational strategy and policy.
Objectives

- To improve overall academic standards.
- To improve the breadth and quality of classroom teaching methodology.
- To improve the accuracy, consistency and use of assessment information.
- To develop a critical mass of motivated and committed teachers to drive reform.
- To secure a consistent level of engagement and participation in reform across all schools.
- To build active professional learning communities across all schools and all phases to promote debate and development.
- To commission and conduct practical research about the education system to ensure future developments are matched to the Omani context.

Values

- The Islamic creed and Omani culture are the foundations for society.
- Teachers and educators are role models for society.
- Empathy and understanding for others leads to commitment.
- Honest, active citizenship leads to fulfilment of potential.
- Self-motivation and enthusiasm lead to success.
- Collective responsibility is a duty at all times and for all aspects of daily life.
Centre Trainers

The Centre has begun operations with 30 Omani trainers. They deliver training programmes with continuous support from international experts who also lead the development of training materials. The number of trainers will increase in the future.

Centre Premises

A temporary building has been prepared in accordance with the Centre standards. The facilities include 56 training classrooms, a library, a science laboratory, restaurant, meeting rooms and prayer rooms.
The Specialised Centre for Professional Training of Teachers

Sharing practice
Training Programmes

The first Centre programmes were selected according to the following priorities for Omani schoolchildren:

- Learning the basics of reading, writing and mathematics.
- Subjects and topics which are important to the future Omani economy.
- Subjects in which international studies compare students’ performance in different countries.
- Targeting all schools and a large number of teachers so changes have a significant impact.
- Avoiding duplication with other projects and programmes conducted by the Ministry.

The principles of training programme design:

In order to achieve Centre objectives and to ensure the work leads to the required change in schools, the programmes are designed on the following principles:

- **Sustained**: Long programmes to provide time to embed knowledge, skills and attitudes
- **Integrated**: Combining the face to face training, e-training and workplace training.
- **Coherent**: Including Ministry priorities and developments and best international practice.
Strategic programmes

These programmes extend over two academic years. Successful teachers will gain an accredited higher education diploma certificate endorsed by an internationally recognised academic institution. The Centre is initially offering the following programmes:

1 Centre Associates Programme:
The programme targets one senior teacher from each school in the Sultanate. It provides them with modern techniques in learning, teaching and evaluating. It also provides advice and guidance on developing other teachers.

2 Centre Arabic Experts Programme (grades 1-4):
The programme is delivered to at least one teacher of Arabic in each grade 1-4 school to provide them with effective educational strategies and methods of integrating the teaching of the four skills of language learning.

3 Centre Mathematics and Science Experts Programme (grades 5-10):
The programmes are for one teacher from each major in each grade 5-10 school. It provides them with investigative learning techniques, research methods and the application of concepts.

4 Expert Supervisors Programme:
The programme targets about one third of the educational supervisors to enhance their skills in supervising and developing teachers.

The Centre has other programmes which will operate in the future to complement and support existing and new strategic programmes.
Requirements to join Centre programmes

Participation requires commitments from teachers and support from the Centre and the Governorate.

1 Commitments required from participants:

- Remaining two years in their schools whilst participating in the programme.
- Attending face to face training in the Centre in Muscat according to the programme plan throughout the two academic years.
- Completion of e-learning and the associated tasks.
- Performing workplace learning tasks in their schools under the supervision of Centre trainers.
2 Specialised Centre support:

- Ongoing communication from Centre trainers and the provision of technical support and feedback through visits, the e-learning platform or by other means.

- Provision of a tablet computer for e-learning and to support workplace learning.

- Provision of pre-paid internet services, by the MOE for each participant, to facilitate the use of e-learning platform.

3 Governorate support:

- The participants are provided with one day each week, free of other duties, to complete their learning activities as shown in the following table. Participants are not required to attend their schools or offices on the study day.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic teachers</th>
<th>Mathematics teachers</th>
<th>Science teachers</th>
<th>Senior teachers</th>
<th>Supervisors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>One day coordinated with the senior supervisor.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Selection of participants

- Participants are selected by the educational directorates in the governorates.
- Priority is given to Omani teachers. If they are not available, non-Omani teachers can be selected.
- Teachers participating in current programmes should have no less than 3 years of experience.
- Teachers should have completed at least one academic year in their schools.
- Teachers should have a good professional relationship with their students and their colleagues.
- The teachers should have the willingness to work hard and be prepared to innovate.
Important information for participants

Accommodation:
Accommodation and breakfast are provided for participants from the Governorates and for those who live in Muscat more than 150 km from the Centre. They are provided with good hotels with excellent services.

Transport:
Flights are reserved for participants coming from Dhofar. Participants from Musandam and Al-Wusta are provided with a transport allowance according to the Ministry procedures. The Centre provides buses to transport participants to and from the hotel at the required times every day.

Catering:
A restaurant is available in the Centre, providing healthy breakfast and lunch meals with low prices.

Official duty allowance:
This is an amount of money allocated to participants who live more than 150 km from the centre. Participants claim the allowance by submitting a form, signed and sealed by the Governorate, to the Centre which completes the payment through existing Ministry procedures.

Training timetable:
Training extends for 6 hours each day with breaks for refreshments and prayers of 30 minutes and one hour. The Centre runs two time-tables starting at 8:00 a.m. or 8:30 a.m. to spread the demand on access and services.

More information:
Participants can contact with the Public Relations Department in their governorate if they need more information about the administrative points related to accommodation and transport.

Specialised Centre location:
The Specialised Centre is in Al Athaiba South, Muscat. It is located in the street parallel to the main street near the Civil Service Employees Pension Fund.
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