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Surfacing academic integrity via authentic & integrated assessment

Introduction & Overview:

Trinity's **Special Purpose Certificate in Teaching, Learning, and Assessment for Academic Practice (SpCert)** is a research-derived **15-ECTS M-level / level 9 minor award**.

The SpCert deliberately motivates candidates to move away from traditional narrative-driven (e.g. essay-based) assessment, instead driving candidates to experience 'alternative' assessment strategies. Participants can complete the SpCert in short or extended timeframes in a three year window.

Programme vision/goals include:

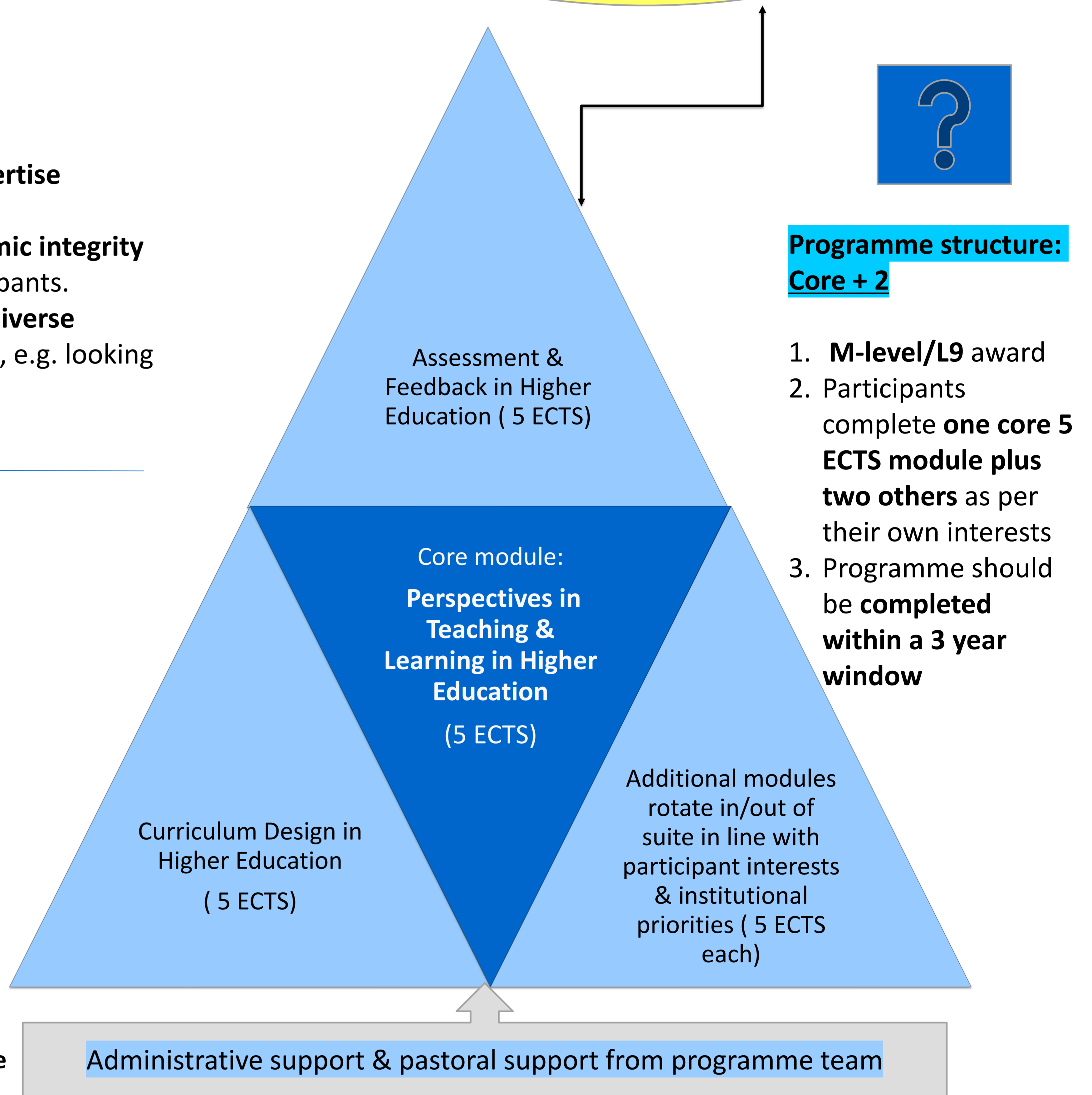
1. **Longitudinal capacity building of pedagogical expertise** institutionally and across the sector.
2. **Develop and grow assessment literacy and academic integrity literacy** relevant to the needs of programme participants.
3. **Model and enable experiential engagement with diverse assessment tasks and practices** in higher education, e.g. looking 'beyond the essay'.

'Signature' programme features:

1. **Purposeful and programmatic** approach to teaching, learning, and assessment.
2. Intentionally flexible around working commitments in a timeframe/ **always part-time**.
3. **Practice-oriented** (e.g. connection of theory with practice, 'authentic' assessment relating to professional practice).
4. **Academic integrity** is foregrounded in assessment.
5. **Modelled and integrated use of rubrics** to support growth of academic integrity literacy .
6. **Blended approach** incorporating/ modelling use of institutional VLE for formative development, e.g. use of discussion boards, polling techniques, synchronous digital teaching.
7. **Dialogic exploration** of curriculum design & assessment activities across all modules.
8. All modules feature one **common/shared learning outcome** to enhance participant awareness of programmatic design.

SINCE 2014/15:

- 473 staff enrolled in the SpCert
- 125 graduates
- 51 modules offered



Why 'force' engagement with non-essay style assessment to surface academic integrity discussions?

1. **Modules are geared to impact on practice**, not solely develop participant awareness of pedagogical theories. **Alternative assessments enable close alignment to professional teaching/assessment practice**.
2. **Module participants mostly hold terminal/PhD degrees**, e.g. candidates are aware of how to 'game' traditional written assessments, e.g. to get an essay 'over the line' with surface level engagement in concepts/the literature. **Alternative assessment can drive candidates to engage with a teaching certificate beyond a 'box tick' mentality**.
3. **Module participants are often unaware of the breadth and diversity of assessment practices**. Candidates are supported to **engage experientially** with a broader range of assessment modalities and to reflect on their application in professional practice.
4. **Assessment diversity** creates opportunities for peer learning and discussion around **challenges to academic integrity both globally and at the discipline level** (e.g. beyond the plagiarism discourse).
5. Candidates are supported to reflect on **strengths and weaknesses of existing assessment approaches** in use in their own disciplines (e.g. essays) and to **consider where/how academic integrity can be upheld through a range of practices and approaches**.

Assessment modalities typically engaged with/ encountered by participants:

- **Scholarly resources** suitable for peers in discipline
- **Critical reflection** on module-level impact on personal practice
- **Reflective annotation** of existing module outlines
- **Reflective annotation on and design of novel module outlines**
- **Development of digital artefacts** to be used in professional practice
- **Annotated peer review of teaching and/or of teaching 'artefacts'**
- **'Capstone' integrative portfolio** linking learning across modules

- **Heavily personalised/ individualised assignments**
- **Perspectives on TLA** from across a broad range of disciplines
- **Active reflection on & peer discussion of current challenges to assessment integrity**
- **Opportunities for expansion of understanding of academic integrity**
- **Integrated use of Turnitin** both for learning and for assessment

Key Takeaways:

1. **Formalised educator development in teaching and learning** (e.g. SpCert awards) **enhances educator assessment literacy and academic integrity literacy**.
2. **Educator experiences of 'alternative' assessment** (e.g. modular/ integrated across the SpCert) **can scaffold the development of their own assessment literacy**.
3. **Assessment authenticity and optionality** (e.g. personalisation/ usable outputs) **support assessment integrity**.
4. **Driving participants to experience non-traditional essay assessment encourages them to experiment with alternative assessments in their own practice**.

Key words: academic integrity, authentic assessment, higher education teaching and learning, higher education academic practice