

My M-level PCET PGCE in ESOL versus a CELTA

I studied a postgraduate certificate in education (PGCE) specializing in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) in 2002/03. It was a new set of criteria for further education teachers and included 120 hours of teaching practice at an inner city college, it was master's level on the national qualifications framework which is actually the same level as first degrees in medicine (although it's slightly less in amount) In 2003 barely more than 5% of the adult population of the UK were postgraduate qualified in anything, also it should be borne in mind that my course also needed occupational health screening and enhanced criminal record checks and was based on what was then new regulations from a body called FENTO that had a 36 page document of criteria that was needed to be passed to be awarded the FENTO PGCE, my PGCE says FENTO in brackets.

For the ESOL component as I mentioned I had the 120 hours of teaching practice teaching ESOL courses at an inner city college and several essays based on that experience but also most of my work was informed by the new adult ESOL core curriculum which had just been introduced which went from entry level 1 to level two on the national qualifications framework, so my ESOL went to level 2 on the NQF, ESOL (Level2) is what the university website said on the course description.

When I was just about to complete the course I was having a conversation with one of the lecturers and in that conversation she said you know you won't be considered qualified to teach ESOL when you've passed this course. I was quite shocked and asked her what she meant, she said that they had brought in new regulations as they felt foreign learners were being treated unfairly so they had introduced minimum standards for would be ESOL teachers that they needed to be NQF level 4 in ESOL to be permitted to teach ESOL in further education. I couldn't believe it partly because I had written essays on traditionally how poor the education levels were in FE in general let alone ESOL and also because my qualification was supposed to be level 7 in teaching.

I had gained a job based on my PGCE teaching at a college in West London but I had to come clean and tell them that I wouldn't be considered fully qualified which I could see made them quite disappointed and I felt ashamed and annoyed as well, certainly given what I had felt were the low standards of many teachers in FE up to that point anyway. One course that did now offer ESOL to level four on the NQF was the certificate in teaching English to adults (the CELTA) I found I could do some professional development in college and I asked if I could do the CELTA as that was what I needed to get the level 4, I was told I could probably teach it so why not do the DELTA (diploma in English language teaching to adults) so I applied for the DELTA, I was working a full teaching week as a business communication teacher but I was given a few hours to study the DELTA. I found it was really

difficult, about as difficult as the PGCE and was also level 7 (M-level) on the national qualifications framework which is written up as senior professional/senior manager level. I attended for the first four weeks but I got disconcerted by the assessment criteria which was two 90 minute exams about 20,000 words in essays which was basically similar to the PGCE I'd just taken and a lot of work along with a full teaching load and no access to a decent library either. I could also add here that the DELTA isn't on the framework for higher qualifications (FHEQ) like my PGCE and that CELTAs and DELTAs are taught at all sorts of places like small language centres with no access to a library but left to write 4,500 word essays which is a very difficult thing to do and actually around this world there are very few places where you find that length of essay even in the best universities. I could also say in my favour that the Greenwich University PGCE I did had the provenance of Garnett College which used to be the country's only dedicated college for training to be a teacher of further education.

The CELTA had quite a lot of assignments as well but it was described as a level 5, 120 hour course with six hours of assessed teaching practice which met the criteria for what is now English for speakers of other languages at level 5 where as my PGCE was a level 7, 1,200 hours with 120 hours of assessed teaching which according to the rules only met the ESOL criteria at level 2. When I left my teaching position in 2005 I was four levels up the lecturer scale at normally one year per level, a couple of years later I remember applying to a language centre in London they wrote back saying thank you for applying for the position as EFL teacher (English as a foreign language) but as we are accredited by the British Council you would need at least a CELTA qualification to teach here. I wrote back saying I had written in my resume that I had a PGCE specializing in ESOL which had 120 hours of assessed teaching practice compared to the 6 hours in the CELTA, she wrote back to me that 120 hours wasn't much and maybe my qualification would be better suited to a college of further education, I then wrote a complaint to the British Council but they basically agreed with what she had said.

To cut a long story short I never found another good teaching job, I was offered two part time positions paying about £200 per week over the next two years but nothing since. A point to add about the CELTA/DELTA issue is that when you look at EFL teaching jobs advertised in other countries they often have a pay scale that says CELTA £15 per hour DELTA £16 per hour which is a mistake as the DELTA is far superior to the CELTA and basically the same level as the PGCE, as an employer I should know I would be using my money well by spending the extra £1 to get the DELTA qualified person but there again they simply don't seem to realize this, as it was with my PGCE no one realized how good it was and I never had any sense of achievement from anyone although I can say when I checked with lifelong learning UK in 2009 they wrote that I had been fully qualified the whole time.



My M level PCET PGCE

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| Student Name: | Mark A BENNIMAN | Date of Birth: | 02-APR-1968 |
| Awarding Institution: | University of Greenwich | HESA Id: | 0210592543634 |
| Programme Studied: | PGCE POST COMPULSORY EDUCATION & TRAINING (FENTO) | Awarded: | Pass |
| Completion Date | 17-SEP-2003 | Level: | Postgraduate |

The Army's Education and Training Service equivalency

You will have high levels of responsibility early in your career, typically expecting to be the principal education advisor to the Commanding Officer of a unit. You will also complete your **PGCE (PCET)** within your first 18 months in the ETS. The role requires you to be professional, approachable and to perform to the highest standards in barracks and on operations.

From: "IA Service" <advice@lluk.org>
Date: 23 March 2009 at 17:28:53 GMT
To: <mark@surlbuddy.org>
Subject: RE: I would like to verify my qualification status.

Hello Mark

Thank you for your enquiry which has been referred to me for a response. I am afraid I can add little to my reply of 20 March 2009 reproduced below, save to say that private language schools, being outside the FE sector, are not covered by the regulatory framework.

To clarify the position regarding your qualifications, according to the regulations which govern FE, you are regarded as qualified as you hold a PGCE and also taught ESOL prior to the introduction of a requirement for an ESOL subject specialist qualification. You are also exempt from the requirement to gain QTLS as you were a qualified practitioner prior to 1 September 2007. I attach a flow chart which clarifies the legal position for your information. You are welcome to show this to anyone who has doubts about your position, and I am happy to have anyone referred to me if they need any clarification.

Regards

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Mark was liked by his students and I always found him to be totally reliable and deeply committed to what ever he put his mind too. He entered fully into the work and activities of the Business Division and demonstrated a depth of character and a genuine love of teaching.