

The Professional Development of Teachers in Higher Education in Oman: A case study of English teachers in the Colleges of Applied Sciences

PhD

Institute of Education

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Dedication

O'Allah Almighty! All praise and gratitude be to you.

Acknowledgements

Having reached the final stage of this journey of my research, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to those who have supported me in accomplishing this thesis.

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My most profound appreciation I reserve for my Mother Fatma, my wife Ghaniya and my little daughter Jude, who believed in me and for their patience and support. I really appreciate every moment you struggled with me throughout my study.

Declaration

I confirm that this is my own work and the use of all material from other sources has been properly and fully acknowledged

Yaqoob Al Ghatrifi

Abstract

This study aims at promoting the professional development of teachers in Omani higher education in general and Colleges of Applied Sciences (CAS) in particular. It seeks to answer the following research questions: What is the existing provision for CPD at CAS? What are participants' understandings of and aspirations for CPD? What are the obstacles to the implementation of effective CPD?

In order to answer these questions, a qualitative research approach and, more specifically, a critical ethnographic case study of two of the constituent CAS colleges was employed. The theoretical underpinnings for the study are social constructivism, adult learning theory and the three-lens approach proposed by Fraser et al (2007) for the evaluation of CPD activities.

Three main methods were used in data collection: documentary analysis of policy documents and reports related to professional development at CAS; focus group discussions with English teachers (local and expatriate), coordinators and heads of department; and interviews with senior managers, including deans and the Programme Director for English.

The findings suggest that CPD was currently conducted on a very ad hoc basis and mainly took the form of one-off sessions, conferences and workshops. There was little evidence of other widely found CPD activities, such as training, professional learning communities, mentoring, reflection and online learning. CAS participants, however, including officials, senior and middle managers and teachers, all acknowledged the importance of teachers' professional development and showed a high level of interest and support for the process.

In terms of participants' aspirations and understandings of CPD, important differences emerged in beliefs around teaching, curriculum and infrastructure and the ways that these impact on motivation to take part in professional development. The ex-pat teachers for instance, were more oriented towards personal goals because they were committed only to a short stay in Oman and expressed frustration at the preferential treatment received by local Omani teachers. The less-experienced teachers expressed an urgent

need for guidance in teaching while more-experienced teachers, expatriate and Omani, were more concerned with issues such as the curriculum.

Three main obstacles to the effective implementation of CPD at CAS emerged: the lack of an effective framework for CPD; organizational issues; social and personal issues and infrastructural issues. Recommendations are made as to possible ways forward.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1. Introduction

This study focuses on teachers' professional development in higher education. In this introductory chapter, I will explain the reasons for the interest which led to my decision to conduct the study, before setting out the main goals and objectives. I will then present the research questions that underpin this study and discuss the theoretical framework that underpins it. Finally, I will outline the structure of the thesis.

1.2. The rationale for the study

My decision to study the professional development of teachers was influenced by my experiences as a teacher (of English language at primary, secondary and tertiary levels), as a supervisor (responsible for teaching and learning in the Ministry of Education), a teacher educator (teaching in-service teachers in the Ministry of Education and novice teachers at University level) and as programme director (supervising teaching and learning both in the English department and English Language Teaching (ELT) sections at the Colleges of Applied Sciences (CAS) in Oman.

As a new teacher I can still remember the struggles I encountered as the only English teacher at my school in a very rural area. For three years, I was given six different levels to teach (Grades Four to Nine) in mixed gender classes where I had no idea if most of what I did was right or wrong. I was moved next to a school in my hometown where I found the issues totally different from my previous rural school, especially the learners. I was lucky enough to have some very supportive colleagues, though their teaching experiences were limited, too. Starting from that year, I was able to share some ideas about teaching with my new colleagues. That year was also

a remarkable time in my career as, in addition to the support I got from my colleagues, I was signed up for an in-service course for the first time. Although the content was not particularly relevant to my teaching, I gained a lot by meeting other colleagues from different schools, both male and female.

These opportunities for professional development allowed me to formulate my teaching journey. I started to identify some key issues, such as learning from my colleagues and reading academic books that tackled different teaching issues at that time. I was moved next to a secondary school where further teaching issues emerged, such as dealing with low achievers and controlling the classroom. It was possible to tackle these and other teaching issues when I registered for a BA at the University of Leeds as part of a major project in cooperation with the Omani Government designed to upgrade diploma holders in teaching to BAs in TESOL. I was lucky enough to be one of those teachers. This enabled me as an experienced teacher to reflect effectively on my teaching and to link theory with practice. On completion, I was appointed first as a regional supervisor and then as a trainer. As one of the highest achieving students on the BA project, I was allowed to continue to an MA in TESOL, specialising in teacher education.

Recalling my teaching struggles and linking them with both my BA and MA studies enabled me to gain more insight into teacher development. Once I graduated, although I was enthusiastic about supporting teachers in my region, many obstacles hindered me. I was assigned to support teachers in my region, both as a supervisor and as a trainer, updating approaches to English language teaching in in-service training sessions and visiting them in their classes. However, I noticed that neither were the teachers keen to apply what had been taught nor was the system to interested in my exploring the issues. Teachers for example, explained their

resistance to change in terms of factors such as teaching loads, motivation and general dissatisfaction. For my part, my heavy workload meant that I did not have the time to follow up most of my teachers and I was not able to link the training with the teachers' needs because of the lack of coordination.

I moved from the Ministry of Education to teach English at some private universities in the Sultanate of Oman where I encountered more teaching challenges. Though the setting was different, my experience to date meant that I was able to deal with many of them in spite of receiving less support from my colleagues. I then moved to teach novice teachers in one of the Colleges of Applied Sciences where still further challenges were encountered. I was given two modules to teach immediately on arrival. I was expecting an induction or at least someone to tell me more about my potential learners, modules and the system in general since I was a stranger to the context. This proved to be a real struggle for both my learners and myself especially since I had been appointed in the second term and I had a heavy workload which included an administrative role (quality assurance officer) in addition to teaching duties. I managed to overcome many challenges as a result of my previous teaching experience, reading academic books and approaching some of my colleagues who were teaching the same modules.

The idea of undertaking research on this lack of support started to take root at this point. After one more year of teaching, I was moved to the Ministry to work as Assistant Programme Director and after a second year (a year before I started my PhD study), I was appointed as a Programme Director for English. At the time, I was fully aware of what was happening at the Colleges of Applied Sciences in Oman (CAS) regarding the lack of professional development. As a result I applied for a PhD which would allow me to empirically investigate this issue.

1.3. Aims and Objectives of the study

The purpose of this study is to improve the professional development of teachers in Omani higher education in general and CAS in particular by exploring:

- available CPD opportunities and activities that help teachers' development
- the participants' understanding of professional development and its purposes
- CAS teachers' CPD needs
- the obstacles that hinder CPD development
- a framework that can be adapted and applied in the CAS context which aims at providing:
 1. sufficient support to newcomers (newly appointed and newly graduated teachers)
 2. sufficient training for teachers to be able to undertake self-development
 3. on-going analysis of professional development needs
 4. a culture supportive of professional development

1.4. Research questions

The overarching research question guiding this study is: What are the main issues in the promotion of professional development at CAS? This question is broken down further into the following sub-questions:

What is the existing provision for CPD at CAS?

What are participants' understandings of and aspirations for CPD?

What are the obstacles to the implementation of effective CPD?

1.5. Theoretical and philosophical underpinnings

This study is guided by two main theories: constructivism and adult learning theory.

1.5.1. Constructivism theory

Constructivism is concerned with how people learn and the active process through which learners use their prior knowledge (both current and past) in order to construct new information (Bruner, 1966; Dewey, 1916; Piaget, 1973; Vygotsky, 1978). There are many forms of constructivism including social (Vygotsky, 1978) and cognitive (Dewey, 1916). The focus is on interaction with the surrounding environment which results in a cognitive growth that help learners adapt their behaviour.

The relevance of this theory for CPD is that it recognises the importance of teacher reflection on new knowledge (gained either in formal or informal settings), and has implications for their future practice (Boud, Keogh, & Walker, 2013). Reflection here is seen as mediating a learning process in which teachers continuously make judgements about what has happened, why it has happened and what has been achieved in order to develop further.

Constructivism was used to guide the present study in the formulation of questions about current practice in CPD at CAS context and its influence on the overall teachers' development (see chapters five, six and seven).

1.5.2. Adult learning theory

Adult learning theory was initially developed in the 1920s (Merriam, 2001) and more recently has also been formulated as 'Andragogy' by Knowles as the science of supporting adult learners to learn (Knowles, 1968, 1980 in Merriam, 2001).

There are several principles underpinning adult learning or 'Andragogy' (Knowles, Holton III, & Swanson, 2014), including the way learning will take place, the content of learning and the importance of learning. Since adults are mature learners, they need to know about the process in order to take conscious control. Prior experience and availability of resources necessary for an efficient learning process are also important principles. When there is a need for learning, adult learners show their readiness. A problem solving orientation in real life situations is also a key factor in adult learning, as is a perceived need for learning.

In fact this theory is at the heart of CPD practice in which teachers take control of learning, including what, when and how in relation to their teaching experience and their needs. As such, it is essential to recognise their preferences in CPD, as will be seen in chapter three.

Adult learning theory is used in the present study to form questions about whether or not CAS teachers were able to learn from the provided CPD opportunities (see chapter five).

1.6. The structure of this thesis

In this first chapter, I have set the scene by providing the rationale for this study, presenting the aims and research questions, and discussing the underpinning theories.

In the second chapter, I will describe the context for the study in order to give readers insights about Oman. I will briefly discuss its history, economy, education at both pre-tertiary and tertiary levels, and the process of professional development in the Omani context in general and in higher education in particular. I will then describe the CAS context, paying attention to evaluations of the professional development conducted by internal and external organizations prior to the start of the present study.

In chapter three I will look at the international literature on CPD in order to provide a context for this study. I will discuss the various forms of CPD provision which will provide a useful reference point for the analysis of the findings in the present study.

Chapters four to seven present the findings of the study. The fourth chapter will justify the methodology employed with reference to the ontology and epistemology which guide it. I explain the choice of the qualitative research paradigm, critical ethnography, a case study approach and the selection of the study participants. I will also discuss ethical considerations and issues concerning research rigour. The chapter will end with a description of the process of data analysis.

In chapter five, I will describe organizational aspect of current opportunities for CPD at CAS. The chapter will focus on CAS stakeholders' viewpoints and reflections on this provision.

Chapter six will explore participants' understanding both of the purposes of the professional development and its importance for their own teaching practice and related their views to the relevant background literature.

In chapter seven, I will discuss the CAS teachers' needs regarding CPD and the issues that affect its effective implementation in the CAS context, based on the study's participants' perceptions.

In chapter eight, I will summarize the findings and discuss both, the contributions of the study and its limitations, put forward recommendations for policy makers and offer suggestions for further research. Finally, I will reflect on my study experience.

Chapter 2 Oman

This chapter offers an overview of Oman in order to provide a context for the study with a brief description of its history, its important location, its demography and politics, its economy and developments in education at both pre-tertiary and tertiary levels. The organization of the Colleges of Applied Sciences (CAS) is described in detail. Finally, an analysis is undertaken of internal and external evaluations of professional development opportunities available in the CAS organization at the start of the fieldwork, thus offering a baseline for the research undertaken in the present study.

2.1 History

Oman has been known by various names throughout its history. At the time of the Sumerian Civilization, for instance, it was called Majan and the territory was associated with copper mining and shipbuilding. Later, it was known as Mazoon or a place of abundant water resources, indicating the richness of water resources in comparison with neighboring countries. Finally Uman or Oman refers to a place in Yemen where Omani tribes migrated from.

Figure 2.1 below indicates the extent of the Oman Empire from the thirteenth century to the eighteenth century (with a disruption from 1498 to 1640 when the Portuguese occupied the country) (Ministry of Tourism, 2013) from Somalia to Cape Delgado in southern Mozambique (Epic World History, 2012).



Figure 2.1. The former Oman empire

(source: http://thefutureofeuropes.wikia.com/wiki/The_Sultanate_of_Oman)

In more recent times, Oman has developed strong relations with a wide range of countries, based on shared commercial and political interests. For example, after the Omani empire collapsed in the eighteenth century, Britain played a fundamental role in the reconstruction, a role which was very much consistent with 'British imperial interests' at a time when it felt threatened by competition with France (Mackenzie, 1984).

1970 was an important turning point when, under the leadership of H. M. Sultan Qaboos, Oman embarked on a new course both internally and externally. Internally, education and health care was made free for all and incomes significantly increased.

Externally, Oman has built good relationships both within the region and beyond, establishing embassies in most of the countries around the world.

2.2 Geography

The Sultanate of Oman is located in the south west of the Arabian Peninsula. It is about 309,000 square kilometers (120,000 square miles), that is equal to the size of the United Kingdom and Ireland (Ministry of Information, 2002). Oman is the second largest country in the Arabian Peninsula. As can be seen in Figure 2.2 below, it shares borders with Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates in the west, Yemen in the south, the Hormoz Bay in the north with the Arabian Sea to the eastern (Ministry of Information, 2015). Oman has a coast line of 3,165 kilometers (1,000 miles) that extends from Musandam in the north of Oman to Salalah in the south.



Figure 2.2: Oman Map
(source: http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/middle_east_and_asia/oman_rel96.jpg)

Oman is mountainous along the coastal regions, and particularly in the north. It is characterized by desert landscapes: sand and gravel cover almost 80% of Omani land. In much of the country, summers are very hot and winters cold and dry. Along the coast, however, the weather is more moderate and humid across the year. The Khareef Monsoon that brings the rain from the Indian Ocean ensures that the south remains green and wet especially in summer (Ministry of Information, 2015).

2.3 Demography

Oman has a population of 4,159,102 people including foreign nationals (National Centre for Statistics and Information, 2015). Indigenous Omanis live for the most part in the interior of Oman in towns such as Nizwa, Rustaq, Haima, Dhofar, Ibri and Buraimi, characterized by deserts and mountains. Most migrant labour from countries in Africa, as well as India, Pakistan and Iran live in coastal town such as Muscat (the capital), Sohar, Sur, Salalah and Khasab.

Arabic is the official language in Oman; it is the medium of instruction in pre-tertiary education. English is widely spoken as a second language and is the medium of instruction in post-secondary education. Other languages include Jabali and Mahri (spoken by Omani people in the south), Swahili (Omani people and immigrants who came from Africa, parts of the former Omani Empire), Balochi (spoken by Omani people who reside in Muscat and some coastal parts in the north of Oman) and Urdu.

Islam is the official religion in Oman. Oman has played an important role in spreading Islam in the region and beyond as shown in Figure 2.2, though small numbers of people are also practicing Christians and Hindus, leading to a change of title of The

Ministry of Islamic Affairs to the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs so as to be more inclusive (Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs, 2015).

2.4 Politics

The country has been ruled by the Albu Saidi dynasty since the sixteenth century. Sultan Qaboos bin Sa'id Al Bu Sa'idi is the current Sultan. Oman is one of the six Gulf Council Cooperation countries (GCC) (Oman, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Kuwait and Qatar) formed in 1981 in order to achieve unity (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2015) (see figure 2.3 below).



Figure 2.3: Countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gulf_Cooperation_Council)

Oman is an absolute monarchy where the Islamic principle of shura or consultation plays an important role (Lynn, 1999) and where the Shura Council has a strong influence in the decision making process, especially following the events of the recent Arab spring (Worrall, 2012). The main ministries are health, economy, foreign affairs and education, which has two ministers, one responsible for pre-university education, the other for Higher Education (Worrall, 2012). Oman is a conservative country, where traditionally women played no part previously in the country's decision making. In 1997, however, H.M Sultan Qaboos decreed that Omani women would be allowed to vote for their representatives in the Shura Council and also increased the seats for women in the Council (Rabi, 2002). Since that time, women have been appointed to many high status posts, including ministers, undersecretaries and director generals. In 2010 H.M. the Sultan issued a directive to establish a special day for Omani women to acknowledge their achievements. Voting was in addition extended in 2003 by H.M. The Sultan to include every Omani citizen who was above 21 years old regardless of gender instead of the previous restriction that only allowed the elite, a quarter of the Omani overall population, to vote.

With its unique geographical location as a gateway to the Arab world from the south, it plays a vital role in shaping both the political and commercial sustainability of the region. Its main political principle of 'not interfering with other countries' internal affairs' (Ministry of Information, 2015) allows it to form very strong relationships with other countries in the region and beyond. It also plays a crucial political role in bridging the gap between the East and West, particularly in recent times in relation to the political conflict between Iran and the United States regarding nuclear

weapons. This political principle was established in the new dawn of Oman under the leadership of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos.

2.5 Economy

Oil and gas are the most important sources of income in Oman (Ministry of Information, 2002). However, one of the most important policies promoted by H. M. Sultan Qaboos aims to reduce the reliance on oil. Agriculture and fisheries, for instance, play an important role in the economy and parts of both the interior (Al Dakhilya Governate) and the Batinah coast are very rich growing areas. The former is known for growing cereals and fruit whereas the latter is famous for growing vegetables. The Omani coast along Sharqiya (Eastern) Governate, the Al Wusta Governate and the Dhofar (the south of Oman) Governate on the Arabian Sea are also very rich in fisheries as another overall income. Livestock also plays a part: the Omani people in the centre and the south keep animals such as camels, cattle, cows and goats. Tourism plays an increasingly important role (Ministry of Information, 2014): the southern Governate (Dhofar) is a popular destination for tourists from within the country and beyond because of its temperate climate created by the Khareef monsoon from June to early September; other regions such as Nizwa, Bahla, Ibri and Sohar boast old forts, castles and traditional markets that attract tourists from around the world.

2.6 Education in Oman

Until relatively recent times, education was practiced in a very traditional and informal way in places such as, mosques, houses and even under trees. It was limited to a very narrow range of people with only three formal schools and two hundred students in 1970 (Ministry of Education, 2002). One of the most important goals for His Majesty the Sultan Qaboos, however, was to establish universal education.

Between 1970 and 1976, the focus was on quantity in order to provide education for every citizen in Oman. Teachers throughout this period of time were recruited from countries such as Egypt; curricula were also influenced by other countries.

Education from this point has been developing systematically (Ministry of Education, 2002). A five-year plan (1976–1981) (Ministry of Education 2002) included the establishment of two preparatory schools, one for boys and the other for girls, with a focus on vocational education. Vocational education was also developed at the secondary level in institutes such as Nizwa Agriculture School, the Teachers' Institute, the Secondary Commercial School and the Secondary Islamic Institute. At the other end of the scale, opportunities for education were also offered to older people who did not have a chance to go to school. In addition, a special school was established for children with disabilities, including hearing and communication difficulties (Ministry of Education 2002). Basic education started in 1999 (Issan & Gomaa, 2010). The number of public schools is now 1045, reaching more than 600,000 learners (Ministry of Education and World Bank, 2013). Pre-tertiary education is provided free of charge for Omanis and non-Omanis.

An Educational Council responsible for the development of education is chaired by a senior member of the cabinet (the Minister of Diwan) and draws on experts from both pre and post tertiary sectors (Ministry of Information, 2015). In addition, an educational committee, chaired by an undersecretary with experience of teaching and administration at both pre and post tertiary levels monitors developments in education nationwide.

The development of education has proceeded in two main stages: General Education (1970 to 1998) and Basic Education (1998 to 2016). The main differences between the two stages are outlined below in Table 2.1.

No	General Education	Basic Education
1	Three levels; elementary (1 to 6), preparatory (1 st to 3 rd Prep) and Secondary (1 st to 3 rd Secondary)	Three levels; Cycle 1 (1to 4), Cycle 2 (5 to 10) and Post-basic Education (11 to 12)
2	Curricula influenced by other countries	Curricula oriented to the Omani context
3	Learners mostly taught by ex-pat teachers (especially the early stages)	Learners taught by local teachers
4	English taught from Grade 4 onwards	English taught from Grade One onwards
5	Study day from 7 to 12.15 in elementary; and 7 to 2 in both Prep and Secondary	Study day from 7 to 2 across all Cycles
6	Six lessons a day for both Elementary and Prep levels and seven for Secondary	Eight lessons across all Cycles
7	Heavy emphasis on summative assessment	Equal emphasis on formative and summative assessment
8	Summative assessment at the end of the academic year)	Learners assessed at the end of each term
9	Only English taught as a second language	French and German also introduced as foreign languages
10	Based on Audio-lingual approach	Task-based and communicative approaches used
11	No career guidance	Learners are guided for future study
12	Fewer opportunities for CPD	More opportunities for CPD
13	Segregated system across all levels	Mixed education in Cycle one

Table 2.1. Differences and similarities between General and Basic Education System in Oman

The growth of pre-tertiary education has inevitably created a high demand for higher education leading to the establishment of a public university (Sultan Qaboos University) established in 1986. Post-secondary education started to grow from this point in response to the rapid growth of students completing secondary education. The early 1990s saw the establishment of Teacher Training Colleges, Health Science Institutes and Technical Colleges designed to meet the national demand for teachers, nurses and engineers. By the end of the 1990s, the private higher education providers appeared on the scene. Currently there are more than thirty private universities and more than fifteen public institutions (Ministry of Information 2015).

The quality of Higher Education in Oman is assured by the Ministry of Higher Education. A special directorate at the Ministry of Higher Education is responsible for the private higher education institutions in Oman which receive regular support from the Omani government in the form, for example, of land. In addition, Technical Colleges that offer engineering and commercial programmes are operated by the Ministry of Manpower, where a dedicated directorate is responsible for monitoring quality.

The government is committed to a policy of Omanization across all sectors, including health, education and engineering, leading to the setting up of training centres and an increase in the number of post-graduate scholarships to 1000. All of these scholarships are supervised by the Ministry of Higher Education and offered according to Omani market needs. My PhD scholarship, for instance, is one part of the overall Omani policy for Omanization. Progress has been substantial. Universities and colleges have been established with the explicit aim of qualifying Omanis to take over jobs previously undertaken by foreign nationals. In education, Teacher Training

Colleges have been offering local recruits diplomas in primary education since the mid-1980s, extending to other phases by the mid-1990s. Initially, teaching staff in Omani higher education universities and colleges (especially the public institutions) drew on expat teachers¹ until high achieving members of the first cohort of Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) graduates were recruited to work as teaching assistants before being sponsored for further study in prestigious universities overseas and returning to work in Oman. The number of local teaching staff in Omani higher education had started to increase by the end of the 1990s.

2.7 The Colleges of Applied Sciences

The Colleges of Applied Sciences (CAS) are a group of six colleges in the main cities in Oman (Rustaq, Sohar, Nizwa, Salalah, Ibri and Sur) which form one organization (see figure 2.4).

¹ An expatriate is a person temporarily or permanently residing, as an immigrant, in a country other than that of their citizenship. It is often shortened to *expat*, the term which will be used throughout this thesis.

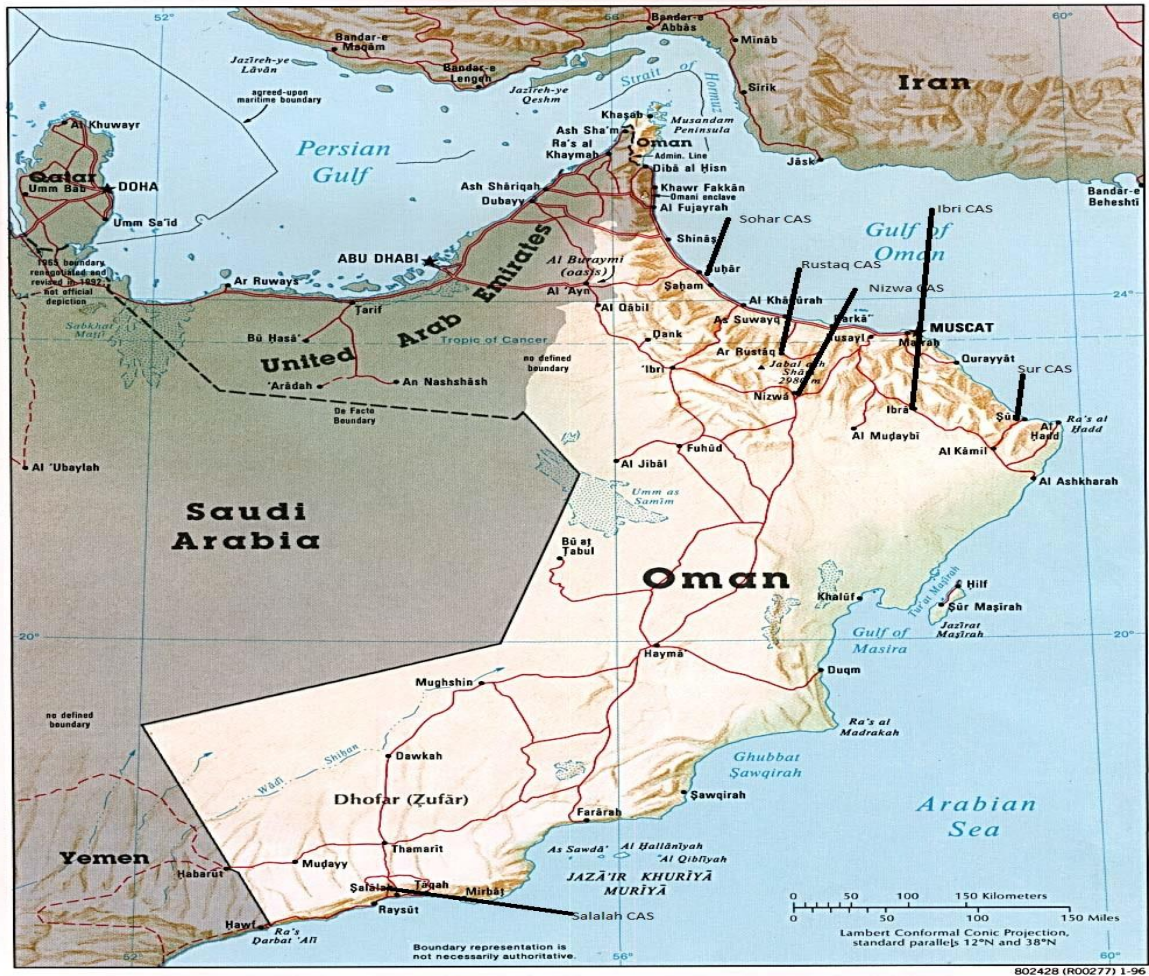


Figure 2.4: Cities where the CAS are located

The colleges were initially established to offer a two-year teacher training diploma (Ministry of Information, 2014) but in 1994 they were upgraded to offer a Bachelor degree in education in various subjects according to Omani market needs at the time. By 2007 all the colleges had been transformed into Colleges of Applied Sciences offering various undergraduate programmes, including Communications, Information Technology (IT), Engineering, International Business and Administration, and Communications and Design.

CAS Rustaq, however, was converted back from an Applied Science college in 2015 to a college of education in response to the Education Council recommendation that one

college should be dedicated to meeting the country's needs for teachers (Oman Daily Observer, 2015). The project was conducted in consultation with an international New Zealand organization called MAVEN, an independent strategy and operations consultancy (<http://www.consultmaven.com/colleges-applied-science-cas-oman#colleges-applied-science-cas-oman>).

The CAS organization is directly operated by the Ministry of Higher Education, unlike other higher education institutions that are either supervised by the Ministry of Manpower and Ministry of Higher Education, as mentioned earlier.

Each year of the programme is divided into three: two compulsory terms (autumn and spring) and one optional summer term. Both of the autumn and spring terms last sixteen weeks including exams and holidays whereas the summer term lasts for eight weeks. Every degree programme entails from 125 to 130 credit hours. Tuition is free of charge and students are given books and a monthly allowance. After Sultan Qaboos University, CAS recruits the highest achieving high school leavers nationwide.

2.7.1 Administration and management structures

The colleges are managed centrally by a general directorate at the Ministry of Higher Education responsible for overall planning and decision-making in direct consultation with the Minister of Higher Education and her undersecretary. Each programme is managed by a programme director (PD) based at the Ministry who is responsible for academic affairs, including supervising the teaching and learning and the assessment process, programme delivery and the recruitment of teachers. The programme director for English, unlike other programme directors who are only

responsible for one or only two colleges, is responsible for English in all of the colleges.

The Directorate General of Colleges of Applied Sciences, within the Ministry, consists of several directorates and sections streaming (Statistics section, Technical office, Post and Documentation section, Performance Evaluation section), as shown in figure 2.5 below: and into four major divisions, including Deputy DG for Academic Affairs, Deputy DG for Academic Support Affairs, the Colleges and the Programme Directors. The colleges report to the Ministry (Directorate General of the Colleges of Applied Sciences), each department and section liaising with its counterpart in the Ministry. For example, in the case of academic matters, HODs and Coordinators report to the Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs to the Deans within the colleges, the Deans to the Deputy DG for Academic Affairs (in the Ministry) to the Programme Directors. It is worth mentioning however, in some urgent issues, decisions can be devolved by heads of department (HoDs) and coordinators directly to the Programme Directors.

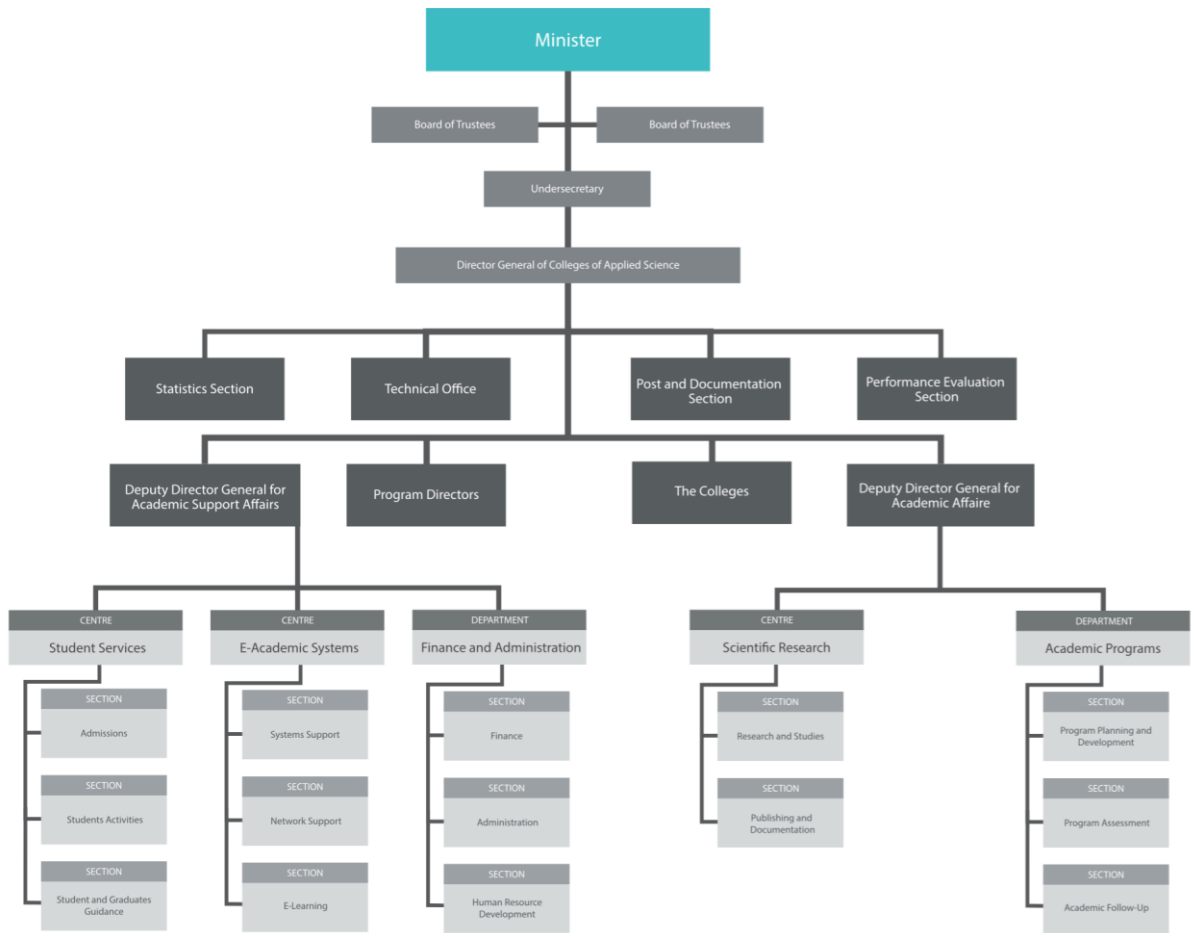


Figure 2.5. CAS organizational structure
 (Source: <http://www.cas.edu.om/Pages/Organizational-Chart.aspx>)

At the college level on the other hand, each college is managed by a dean with two assistant deans (one for academic affairs and the other for academic support) to whom HoDs report (see figure 2.6). The academic support teams within the college cover areas such as admission and registration, administrative affairs, students' activities and human resources.

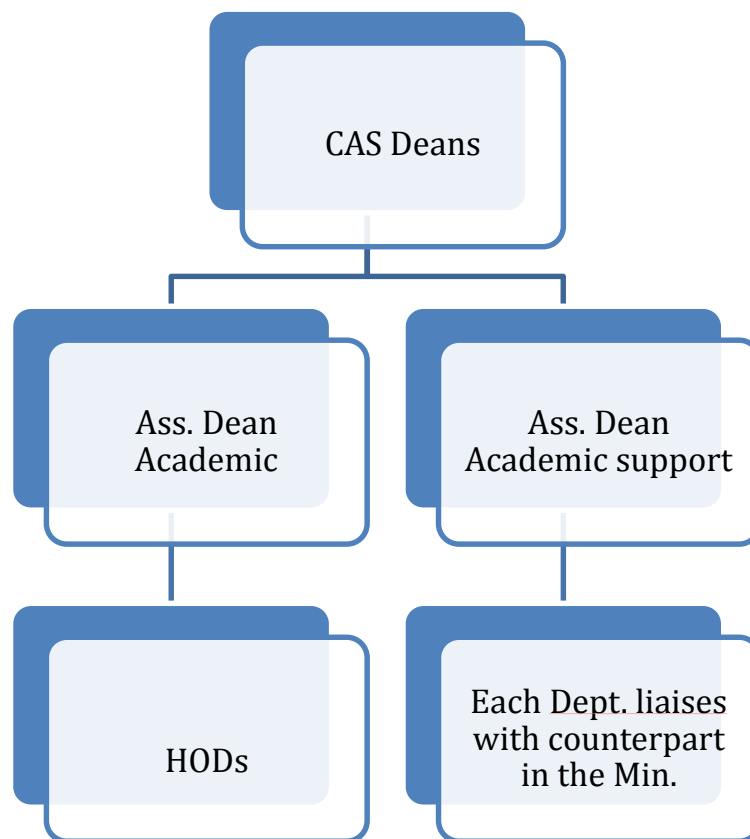


Figure 2.6: Colleges organizational structure

Communication between the Ministry and the colleges occurs through meetings that are chaired by the programme director. These meetings are conducted at the beginning of each semester to reflect on what has been achieved and to plan for the next semester and are attended by the CAS HODs and coordinators. At such meetings, coordinators (see below for fuller discussion of this role) and HODs are requested to raise any issues, recommendations and suggestions based on their own reflections and feedback from regular meetings with coordinators and members of the academic staff. Other meetings that take place at the Ministry include exam boards to approve grades attended by the HODs and assessment coordinators. In addition, the programme director and assistant programme director visit the colleges once a semester to supervise the learning and teaching processes. A final tool for

communication is a Google blog specifically designed for the CAS organization which facilitates discussion of issues such as exams and teaching materials between the colleges.

2.7.2 Organization at the college level

The academic departments for all majors are run by HoDs nominated by the CAS deans and whose posts are ratified by the Minister. The HOD allocates teachers to classes according to their qualifications, specialisms and years of experience. The teaching load is limited to sixteen contact hours; in addition teachers are required to offer office hours for students in need of academic support and to undertake administrative work such as marking, entering marks into the CAS electronic system, and invigilation.

Coordinators are nominated by HODs and approved by the programme director. The most obvious criteria for selection are experience and qualifications (though local teachers are preferred over ex-pats). There are several coordinators, including the e-learning coordinator, the module coordinator, the level coordinator and the assessment coordinator. The e-learning coordinator is responsible for the e-learning process, including training both teachers and students to use the college software, providing e-learning sources and developing the e-learning strategies in the colleges. The module coordinator is responsible for coordinating taught modules within the college and across the other colleges for the purposes of standardization in terms of course outline, units covered, exams and marks entry in the system. The level coordinator is responsible for liaising across levels, such as Year One for a certain major within and across colleges.

Assessment coordinators, play a more important role than other coordinators, and are responsible for overseeing the assessment process which, in the CAS organization, is both formative and summative. For each module, 50% of marks are allocated to continuous assessment and a project whereas the other 50% is assigned to the final exams. Mid-term tests are included within the formative assessment. Teachers who contribute to a module are responsible for marking in accordance with a marking guide designed by the assessment coordinators and approved by the programme director.

Communication in academic matters take place between the Ministry, the Programme Directors and HoDs and Coordinators as shown in figure 2.7 (coordinators are labeled as Foundation, Y1 as Level coordinator, Y2 as Level coordinator, Assessment and E-Learning).

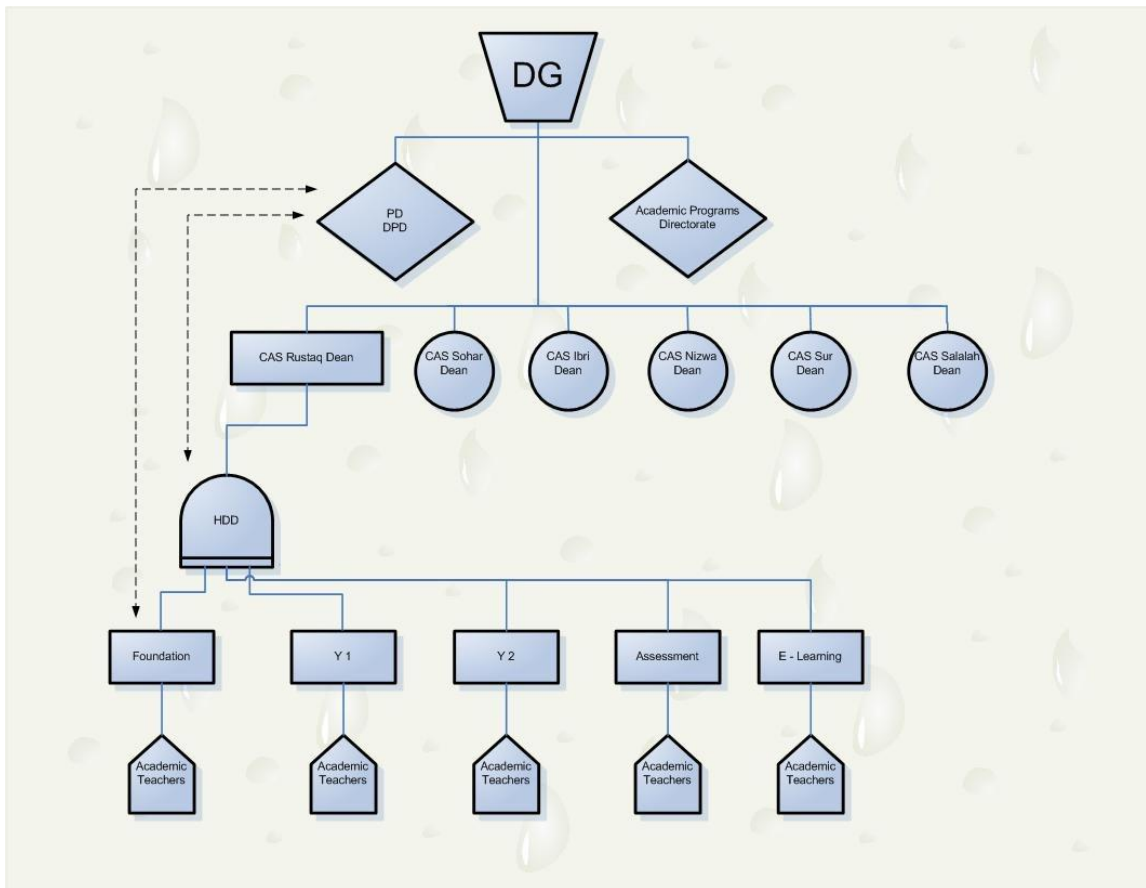


Figure 2.7: Communication system in CAS

2.7.3 Recruitment

The minimum qualification required to teach at the colleges is a Masters' degree. Some staff are recruited directly by the Ministry, others by an agency. Teachers at CAS, both Omani and foreign nationals, used to be paid according to their qualifications and teaching experience. However, following the so-called 'Arab spring', local employees' salaries were increased across all sectors in 2011; foreign national teachers were not, however, included in the new scheme. Foreign nationals are offered a one year renewable contract. Ex-pat teachers and especially those on agency contracts are provided with free accommodation and utilities, usually in the

form of a two bedroom apartment. The teachers with a Ministry contract are given a monthly housing allowance.

2.7.4 CAS infrastructure

There are several buildings on each campus; the academic building (housing academic teachers' offices with parking places); the administration building (deanship, administrators and registration and admission departments with parking places); and the teaching building with classrooms, lecture theatres, restaurants for students and staff (see Figure 2.8 Below), and a Learning Resource Centre (LRC). Parking places for students are located outside the colleges. The restaurants serve a variety of food at very reasonable prices.



Figure 2.8.: a staff restaurant

The classrooms can accommodate up to 80 learners. They are well-equipped with internet connection, projector, speakers, whiteboard (some classes with smart board) and comfortable desks and chairs. There are also several labs for different majors within English. Learners are given opportunities to work in their study time in the

labs; some classes are taught in the labs as well. The classrooms, as shown in Figure 2.9 below, are divided into separate sections for female and male students.



Figure 2.9: a typical classroom

Teachers are provided with laptops and are allocated office space with three to four teachers sharing a room (see Figure 2.10)



Figure 2.10: a typical teacher's office

While the standard of buildings and resources is very high across the colleges, there are nonetheless differences. For instance, teachers in Rustaq CAS are provided with parking spaces and social spaces equipped with tea and coffee making facilities, a fridge and microwave, as well as daily newspapers and magazines in both Arabic and English (see figure 2.11). Teachers at Sohar, however, have neither social spaces nor designated parking spaces.



Figure 2.11. Teachers' social spaces

Table 2.2 below sets out the degrees offered and the numbers of students and teachers at each of the colleges in the academic year 2014/2015.

College	Degrees offered	No of students	No of teachers
Rustaq (Before converting to Education)	International Business Admin; Information technology; ELT and education	1718	100
Sohar	Engineering; Information technology	1511	80
Salalah	Communication studies; International business Admin and Information technology	769	50
Ibri	Design and information technology	1165	80
Sur	Applied Biotechnology; Communication studies and Information technology	998	60
Nizwa	Communication studies; Design and International Business Admin	1487	90

Table 2.2: Degrees, student numbers and staff numbers at CAS colleges

2.7.5 The CAS programmes

Following the decision to convert the colleges of education to colleges of applied sciences in 2007, the Omani government reached an agreement with PINZ (the

Education Global Specialist) which led to the setting up of four applied science programmes to include communications, information technology, International business administration and design (NZTEC, 2008).

English is the medium of instruction across the CAS system except for modules such as Arabic, Islamic Studies and History. The student journey consists of two main stages. The first stage is a two year English language programme, comprising foundation (general English and academic skills) and Year one (English for academic/specific purposes). Most of the teachers in the foundation level are native speakers of English. The local teachers are outstanding graduates selected to teach in the colleges after finishing their postgraduate studies overseas, as described earlier.

CAS English programme draws on international language teaching materials such as 'Headway' and in-house materials developed to teach English for Special Purposes linked to the learners' contexts and areas of specialization. The in-house materials are prepared by teachers who are relieved from teaching duties for a certain period of time. All departments use a communicative teaching approach.

2.7.6 Quality Assurance

The CAS organization attaches considerable importance to quality assurance and draws on both internal and external processes. Externally, an affiliation agreement was signed with the New Zealand Tertiary Education Consortium (NZTEC), for the purpose of ensuring that CAS offered programmes meeting internationally recognized standards. The New Zealand Team conducted two main reviews, one in 2008 and the other in 2011. In addition, internal academic accreditation is mandatory and all six colleges undergo a self-audit accreditation process overseen by

the Oman Academic Accreditation Authority (OAAA). The most recent internal accreditations were undertaken in 2014.

In addition, the Omani government instructs each Ministry to produce a strategic development plan evaluated by the State Audit Institution (SAI). The CAS organization contributes to this process. The first stage (phase one), undertaken in 2010, was conducted by the CAS deans and two internal representatives with the support of international experts in designing strategic plans (Ministry of Higher Education, 2013: 2). Six strategic goals were identified including aligning governance and management structures with the CAS Mission, Vision and Values; advancing students' learning; and striving for academic excellence (Ministry of Higher Education, 2009: 16). Recommendations from the first phase were incorporated in the final version of the strategic plan working in collaboration with the officials at the Ministry. The main mission of CAS was identified as 'the provision of targeted high-quality programmes that are responsive to labour market needs and that prepare graduates for employment in accordance with national plans and contribute to the achievement of sustainable development' (Ministry of Higher Education, 2013: 36). With regards to the human resource development, the strategic plan emphasizes the importance of recruiting, developing and motivating teachers who are capable to achieve the vision. The challenges in relation to implementing this vision were, however, acknowledged:

Higher education institutions are significant employers, competing for human resources in a context of scarce resources, a circumstance which requires innovative measures to attract, retain, develop and motivate staff.

(Ministry of Higher Education, 2013:69)

2.8 Professional development in Oman

Human resource development in general plays a crucial part in the Omani government and has had considerable impact on the Omani economy in recent years (Common, 2011). Pre-tertiary education has been given particular attention (Ministry of Information, 2014), with many opportunities for teachers in primary and secondary education, including INSET (Nunan, Tyacke, & Walton, 1987) and the setting up of an inspection system (currently known as supervisory system), dedicated to improving learning and teaching. Several training centres were opened, drawing on a number of local trainers with experience of teaching at all levels and who have undertaken Masters qualifications abroad. In addition, a specialized centre for the 'Professional Training of Teachers' was established (Ministry of Information, 2014). The tertiary sector, in contrast, has been relatively neglected (Bloom, Canning, & Chan, 2006).

Professional development in the colleges of applied sciences is organized by the Human Resources Directorate at the Ministry of Higher Education in collaboration with the Human Resource sections of the colleges which in turn liaise with HoDs and coordinators (see Figure 2.4 below).

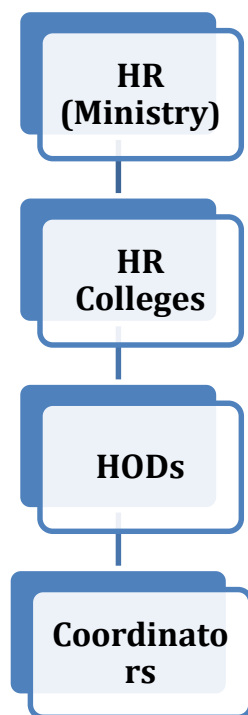


Figure 2.12: Organization of Professional development

Typically, a list (see appendix A) of one-off sessions is circulated by HODs to the teachers who select the sessions which are of greatest interest (see table 2.3 below for an example list). The HoDs then send the selection to the HR section which forwards it to the Ministry for final approval. Teachers who are nominated are provided with accommodation or an accommodation allowance.

No.	Programme
1	Strategic planning
2	Change management
3	Electronic contracts' writing
4	Auditing skills

Table 2.3: Sample one-off sessions at CAS (translated from an Arabic document)

Since the main mission of the CAS is to ensure quality, teachers need to be highly qualified and trained to play the intended role. One way to assure this is through continuing professional development. However, the provision of opportunities for professional development at CAS has been strongly criticized by both the external and internal mechanisms for quality assurance discussed above. Several issues regarding professional development have been raised including: its ad hoc and partial nature, induction, teacher appraisal and research.

2.8.1 Current limitations

Professional development in general was highlighted by the OAAA as an issue for all of the colleges. The move from Arabic to English as the language of instruction when the colleges of education were converted into colleges of applied sciences was recognized as having far reaching implications in terms of human resources and professional development. The first evaluation to raise this issue was the NZTEC (2008) report which drew attention to the fact that heavy workloads constrained the time available for the professional development necessary to improve the quality of teaching. The team recommended:

Staff recruitment, development and work loading to be reviewed to allow teaching staff to develop their academic careers and provide a continuous professional development of programmes and courses.

(NZTEC, 2011: 19)

The OAAA also recommended that more support was needed in terms of human resources in general and teachers in particular for efficient performance in the new system:

The College has undergone a shift in its staff profile as it has moved from an Arabic-language based College of Education to an English-language based College of Applied Sciences. In acknowledgment of this, the Panel recommends that the College develop a local human resources strategy in order to support its recruitment, induction and professional development activities.

(Oman Academic Accreditation Authority, 2010: 6)

Actual provision for professional development, however, can be characterized as extremely patchy with audit reports for all six colleges raising matters of concern. In some cases, the reports indicate an awareness of the weaknesses on the part of the colleges. Salalah CAS, for instance, notes that “there is a need for teacher training to ensure proficiency and professional development for new members” (Salalah CAS Audit Portfolio P 39 in Oman Academic Accreditation Authority, 2011).

In a similar vein, Sur CAS acknowledges that it does not have a local professional development programme for its staff.

A widespread concern related to the *ad hoc* nature of provision. Oman Academic Accreditation Authority (2010: 35), for instance, points out:

There appears to be no thought out strategy relating to the on-going professional development of staff. For academic staff, attendance at conferences and specific IT training sessions seem to be the major form of professional development. Not all staff are aware of the opportunities

available for staff development nor the procedures required for availing themselves of these opportunities. Many staff felt they required increased levels of support for professional development learning suggesting the need to develop a culture that promotes continuous professional development.

Criticism aimed at Rustaq CAS focused rather on quantity rather than quality and the same lack of strategic vision:

The Panel found a considerable number of internal professional development activities being undertaken, including a range of workshops on quality assurance. The Panel found widespread confirmation of staff taking part in these activities. Planning for these activities, however, is not generally explicitly linked to strategic aims or identified needs and systematic evaluation of activities (individually and collectively) is limited.

(Oman Academic Accreditation Authority, 2014: 55)

The report on Ibri CAS, in contrast, draws attention to the limited focus of professional development:

The Oman Accreditation Council recommends that the College of Applied Sciences Ibri urgently develop a comprehensive academic staff development plan along with policy and procedures for the adequate of resources to support this plan.

(Oman Academic Accreditation Authority, 2010: 40)

Notwithstanding these criticisms, the OAAA Panel praised the efforts of Nizwa CAS, for instance, in developing and implementing an in-house Professional Development Programme to support academic staff development (Oman Academic Accreditation Authority, 2012: 42).

Two aspects linked to professional development, however, were singled out for special criticism: Induction and teacher appraisal.

2.8.1.1 Induction

The handling of induction was raised by the OAAA in relation to all of the Colleges of Applied Sciences except Rustaq, which was the last to be reviewed and which had therefore been able to learn from the other reviews:

The Panel considered the Staff Orientation Booklet to be comprehensive and potentially very useful to new staff and noted that it includes a detailed “New Employee Induction Checklist” as well as a questionnaire to collect staff feedback on their induction. There is also evidence of the ELT Department mentoring programme being implemented and well-received by those involved. The Panel recognizes strength in CAS Rustaq’s staff induction processes and encourages the College to ensure that this system is subject to systematic monitoring and review to help ensure consistency of implementation and ongoing improvement.

(Oman Academic Accreditation Authority, 2014: 54-55)

On the other hand, the other colleges were criticized for the fact that their induction either was not formal and not systematic or not well-organized. Provision at Ibri was described as ‘largely sporadic’ and ‘not constituting a full induction programme’ (Oman Academic Accreditation Authority, 2010:39). CAS Sohar induction programme was criticized for its focus on ‘Ministry and College rules and regulations rather than broader topics’ (Oman Academic Accreditation Authority, 2010: 39) while, in the case of CAS Nizwa and CAS Salahah’ the focus was on the consistency of

delivery (Oman Academic Accreditation Authority, 2012: 41; Oman Academic Accreditation Authority, 2011: 39) and, in the case of Sur CAS on the need to formalize its induction process (Oman Academic Accreditation Authority, 2013: 40).

2.8.1.2 CAS teachers' appraisal report

CAS teachers' annual appraisal report which has clear implications for professional development needs, was another issue of concern raised as part of the OAAA internal accreditation: as mentioned earlier, staff do not have the automatic right to see what has been written. There is a yearly appraisal report for the teachers (both local and expat), usually completed by the HODs in consultation of coordinators. This report is not seen by teachers and is considered to be high stakes for both local and expat teachers. For local teachers, it has the potential to lead to managerial posts and for further study and development; for expat teachers, it determines contract renewal.

A further concern is that a significant amount of the documentation including the staff performance appraisal form, is available only in Arabic, which is problematic for the non-Arabic speaking staff (Oman Academic Accreditation Authority, 2010: 40). In all of the audits, the Panel recommends greater transparency in staff appraisal and the sharing of outcomes with the individuals concerned.

2.8.1.3 Professional development for research

Professional development for research was another raised issue in the CAS audit process. The OAAA reports that attempts to offer professional development opportunities for research were to be found only in Nizwa and Sur CAS:

According to the College, [Nizwa CAS] works towards enhancing the research capabilities of its faculty members through a series of workshops on research methods. These workshops are conducted by training institutes and sometimes by senior faculty members. The College planned to establish a Professional Development Committee in 2011-2012 that would be responsible for coordinating professional development activities. However, the committee had still not been established at the time of the audit ... The Panel urges the College to pursue this.

(Oman Academic Accreditation Authority, 2012: 29)

The Panel noted that CAS Sur has attempted to address these issues by appointing an Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs and Research and a Head of the newly formed Scientific Research Department. The Panel encourages this department to implement its action plan, such as organizing workshops to help staff develop research skills and with other academic departments put in place a mentoring scheme whereby experienced staff can share areas of good practice with less experienced members.

(Oman Academic Accreditation Authority, 2013: 26-27)

The OAAA accordingly recommended variously that a research strategy be developed in line with its Mission, Vision and strategic goals (Oman Academic Accreditation Authority, 2011: 21); that a regular review mechanism should be established so that staff can benefit from 'on-going, appropriate development activities which are specific to their needs and lead to enhancement of research performance' (Oman Academic Accreditation Authority, 2014: 36).

Finally, it is worth mentioning that the ex-pat teachers in Omani higher education outnumber local teachers, in general, and in the CAS context, in particular. They play an important role in the development of the country, both as consultants in the delivery and development of programmes in universities in Oman and by working there as teachers. There is, however, great emphasis on developing local teachers to take posts that have been held in the main by ex-pats and more CPD opportunities and managerial posts are now offered to local teachers in order to address the overall Omanization strategy. However, in practice, this strategy has also given rise to tensions within the workforce as discussed in chapter seven of this study.

2.9 Summary

Oman's overall development and growth has positioned it in such a way as to play an important role in the politics and economics of the region. Education has played a vital part in this process and a considerable investment has been made in higher education in order to produce graduates that are able to serve both national and international market needs. The Colleges of Applied Sciences have been key to this development (Ministry of Information, 2015). One important aspect of achieving quality in higher education is the promotion of teacher professionalism through CPD (Day & Sachs, 2004). Both internal (OAAA) and external (NZTEC) evaluations of current provision, however, have highlighted shortcomings. There is clearly a need for looking more closely at the gaps in current provision in terms of planning for more effective delivery in the future. I will look next at the literature related to professional development in which the present study is anchored.

Chapter 3 Literature Review

As discussed in the previous chapter, the Omani government attaches considerable importance to developing the education sector in general and human resources within that sector, in particular. In this chapter, we turn to a discussion of the literature concerning professional development. I will begin by examining some definitions of CPD for teachers and its goals and objectives. I will then consider factors which have been identified in the literature as affecting the success or otherwise of CPD, teachers' beliefs and the ways in which teachers – as adults – learn. Pertinent to this discussion is the central importance of conducting an analysis of teacher needs and the ways in which these map on to institutional priorities. A description of the various different models of delivery is followed by a discussion of theoretical frameworks for CPD.

3.1 Understanding Professional Development: Goals and Objectives

Professional development is a long process that often starts with the pre-service degree and continues throughout the career journey (Villegas-Reimers, 2003). The term Continuing Professional Development (CPD) usually refers to a range of inputs which support the development of teachers after they have qualified and throughout their careers. (Madden and Mitchell, 1993: 12 in Jones & Robinson, 1997) define CPD in the following terms:

The maintenance and enhancement of the knowledge, expertise and competence of professionals throughout their careers according to a plan

formulated with regards to the needs of the professional, the employer, the professions and society.

CPD is important for a number of reasons. It enhances teachers' ability to evaluate and act efficiently in situations where critical judgment is required, for instance, in relation to changes in curriculum, subject knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and technology (Grogan & Andrews, 2002). As Villegas-Reimers (2003) point out, teachers play a double role in this process: as agents for change and as one of the variables that need to be changed. By the same token, Darling-Hammond (1994) argues that CPD is a key element in developing the learning and teaching processes; it also plays an essential role in promoting quality (Guskey, 2002).

CPD is important for both newly qualified teachers and teachers who have recently arrived in the institution. New graduates are in particular need of guidance and support in order to act appropriately in relation to the issues they may encounter in the new context (Timperley, 2008). The same applies to teachers transferred from one school to another or when teachers are promoted to a new post such as Senior Teacher or Coordinator. These examples are relevant to the Colleges of Applied Sciences (CAS) context, where new teachers, both foreign and local, are recruited every semester. Staff entering these posts need support to function effectively. Ongoing development is required for all teachers both new and old in order to keep themselves updated and to cope with the local and international change (Duran, Brunvand, Ellsworth, & Sendag, 2012; Jones, Ramanau, Cross, & Healing, 2010; Waycott, Bennett, Kennedy, Dalgarno, & Gray, 2010). In the course of their career, teachers meet successive generations of learners; CPD allows them to respond to the changing needs of each generation.

Some of the goals of CPD focus on the development of the individual; others on institutional improvement; the links between the two are strong. Scholars such as Fraser, Kennedy, Reid and McKinney et al. (2005), Day and Sachs (2004) and Villegas-Reimers (2003) highlight the importance of teachers' growth as individuals since they are the agents of change which may lead directly or indirectly to improved learning outcomes for students (Newmann, King, & Youngs, 2000). Capacity building in this context focuses on developing knowledge and skills that are required for new practices (Mangin, 2014). By the same token, writers such as Guskey (2002) and Day & Sachs (2004) point to the implications for institutional improvement of the changes in classroom practice and teachers' beliefs and attitudes. Three main objectives of CPD, then, are teachers' growth as individuals, students' learning outcomes and overall institutional development.

3.2 Factors affecting the success of CPD

Several issues need to be considered when planning, designing and implementing CPD. Such factors include: the context where this development is addressed; the culture; the role of self-direction; the time available; the financial resources; and teacher motivation. These factors are discussed in detail below.

3.2.1 The Context

Context refers here to the place where CPD is designed and conducted. CPD based in a particular context may help participants to reflect more deeply on their teaching practice, generating more ideas and promoting interaction rather than relying on transmission learning (Kennedy, 2005; Eraut, 1994) . For example, if a

new teaching approach is to be introduced, teachers are able to relate new knowledge to their context and to consider its effectiveness (or otherwise). Similarly, by taking account of participants' experience, course leaders are better able to deliver the new knowledge more effectively. Learners' background, the curriculum, the learning culture and policy in a particular context, then, are among the factors that should be considered when designing professional development activities for any teachers (Fraser, Kennedy, Reid & Mckinney, 2007). Context also includes school administration which is able to offer support, for instance, by adjusting teaching loads.

3.2.2 Culture

Culture refers to the learning environment where CPD activities formal and/or informal take place and plays a fundamental role in teachers' learning and development (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 1999). Senior managers are responsible for creating a culture supportive of learning by making CPD opportunities available and providing incentives for teachers to engage in individual and collective learning, as will be discussed in greater detail below.

3.2.3 Time

Time refers to the duration and intensity of CPD and is related to culture and context. In certain institutions, for instance, time is considered a very important factor in professional development (Lockyer, Gondocz, & Thivierge, 2005). The allocation of sufficient time allows both teachers and trainers to reflect, enriching both the teaching and learning processes and enables teachers to link new

knowledge with prior experience (Bell & Gilbert, 1996). Heavy workloads are considered as a big factor that inhibits teachers from engaging with CPD (Day, Sammons, & Stobart, 2007). For example, if teachers are bound with too many administrative activities in addition to teaching, this may prevent their willingness and ability to take part in professional development activities.

3.2.4 Financial resources

Financial support plays a crucial role in CPD (Day, 1999) in activities such as attending conventions, conducting symposiums and/or forums, workshops and research. Financial support is also required to pay for replacement teachers which allow teachers to engage in CPD within the school. As Earley and Bubb (2004) point out, it is incumbent on management to ensure that budgets are well spent by matching opportunities for CPD that to the needs of their teachers.

3.2.5 Teachers' motivation

Blanchard and Thacker (2013: 79) define motivation as “the direction, persistence, and amount of effort expended by an individual to achieve a specified outcome”. Very importantly, it is strongly linked to the needs and desires of individuals and, as such, plays a very important role in shaping teachers' professional development (Kelani & Khourey-Bowers, 2012). Teachers can be motivated to engage in CPD through external stimuli. Styslinger, Clary, and Oglan (2014) for example, suggest that administrators need to provide incentives such as promotion and materials, time and opportunities for discussion and learning. McMillan, McConnell, and O'Sullivan (2014: 15), however, argue that internal motivation plays a more

important role than the external motivation in promoting teachers' development in the areas of 'career advancement, potential growth and achievement'.

3.3 How do teachers learn?

As suggested in chapter one in the discussion of adult learning theory, teachers are also learners (Duncombe & Armour, 2004) who, just like their students, learn by 'doing, reading and reflecting' (Hastie, MacPhail, Calderón, & Sinelnikov, 2014). Hargreaves (2000: 153) suggests that teacher learning tends to proceed in four different stages: 'the pre-professional age' (where teachers learn alone from own practice following a prescribed syllabus with less support from others); 'the age of the autonomous professional' (where teachers' 'status' and 'salaries' have improved and more attention is given to both pre and in-service education; 'the age of the collegial professional' where teachers start to share knowledge and collaborate; and 'post-professional or postmodern professional' where economics and communications have a great influence on teaching approaches and learning.

Several conditions may promote adult learning. Shulman and Shulman (2004), in a discussion of a new teacher training curriculum, for instance, suggest that for successful outcomes, students need to be:

Ready (possessing vision), Willing (having motivation), Able (both knowing and being able to do), Reflective (learning from experience), and Communal (acting as a member of professional community).

It can be argued that the same conditions need to be in place when student teachers make the transition to the classroom (Desimone 2009 in Evans, 2014). In particular, the importance of learning in the context of a professional community

should be noted (Shulman & Shulman, 2004). There are sources of support for teacher learning, both inside and outside the institution, formally and informally.

3.3.1 Teachers' growth as individuals

As mentioned earlier, teachers are considered to be agents for change in learning and teaching processes (Villegas-Reimers, 2003). As such their growth as individuals plays a key role in this process. Several paths to teachers' growth can be identified including: self-development (undertaken in teachers' free time); institutional and collegial support; and external support.

3.3.1.1 Self-development

Self-development refers to teachers' ability to learn from available opportunities both in and/or out of their teaching institutions. Skills and competencies can be developed outside the institution through reading academic books, journals and even blogs or enrolment in online courses, all of which lead to both increased subject and pedagogical knowledge. They can also be achieved through reflection (Day & Sachs, 2004) on their own teaching practice with the support of peers and through systematic inquiry (Cochrane-Smith and Lytle 1999 in Day & Sachs, 2004). Less-experienced teachers have many opportunities for learning from more experienced peers through observation. Most such examples of self-development are driven by personal self-motivation.

3.3.1.2 Institutional and Collegial support

Institutional support also plays a vital role in shaping teacher development. The role of culture has already been mentioned above. However, several other factors also influence teachers' growth in knowledge and skills, including school leaders and colleagues.

School leaders can play a fundamental role by encouraging teachers to engage in collective learning and providing dedicated slots of time for discussion; by making CPD opportunities available to teachers according to their needs; allotting time for professional development by redistributing workloads within professional development plans; and by encouraging the notion of professional development as an ongoing process. Mitchell (2013), emphasises the importance of collaboration between administration and teachers and involving teachers in the leadership process.

Colleagues also play a vital role in shaping teachers' professional development (Kelly, 2013). For example, new teachers need support in their initial stages from more experienced ones in the form of mentoring and informal guidance. Likewise experienced teachers transferred to a new setting as benefit from collaboration with colleagues already familiar with that setting.

3.3.1.3 External Support

External support can be offered by nearby academic institutions, and in the form of attendance at conferences, symposia, colleagues from different places, online blogs and virtual learning. Again intrinsic motivation plays a vital role in such sense that enables teachers to seek for self-development elsewhere than their own

institutions. External support can be in the form of a professional learning community (a form of CPD which will be elaborated further below) where teachers from the same institution or beyond can support each other's learning. External support also includes international collaboration, such as the relationship between Cambridge University in the UK and educational institutions in Zambia (Haßler, Hennessy, Cross, Chileshe, & Machiko, 2014). External support in addition, can be by supervisors that support teachers in the form of guidance rather than evaluation.

3.4 Teachers' Beliefs

Like motivation, teacher beliefs – or teacher cognition – are an important component in professional development (Borg, 2003). As Woods (1996: 69) asserts in a discussion of language teaching, “teachers interpret a teaching situation in the light of their beliefs about the learning and teaching of what they consider a second language consists of: the result of this interpretation is what the teacher plans for and attempts to create in the classroom”. Borg (2003) talks in terms of what teachers ‘know, believe and think’, cognitive elements which direct teachers’ practice and development. It is therefore important to target such beliefs in the process of teachers’ development through CPD. Lamb (1995), in a study of the effect of INSET courses, reports that his former undergraduate participants implemented the recommendations of a course taught a year before the start of the study in a very limited way and suggests that this was the case because the participants’ beliefs about teaching reading skills were not considered in the course. He concludes that it is essential to consider teachers’ beliefs in any training or teachers’ development in order to promote quality. Teacher beliefs are

therefore of fundamental importance in identifying approaches likely to be successful in bringing about desired change.

Targeting teachers' beliefs is clearly important but since they are hidden and unseen, as described above, how can these beliefs be studied? The current consensus is that the most effective way is through qualitative research in which teachers can articulate their teaching practice through, for example, journal entries, reflection, observation, interviews and thinking aloud (Borg, 2015). The present study will make use of focus group discussions, where teachers are given chance to articulate their point of views regarding the current practice CPD in the CAS context, as described in chapter four.

3.5 Needs' analysis

Needs analysis is meant to identify the gap between the current performance abilities and the potential requirements of the workforce (McConnell, 2003). McArdle (1998) describes this gap as a series of processes through which issues in the workforce are recognized and targeted in training. Needs analysis also offers a systematic approach through which reasons for less than expected performance in an organization are determined (Blanchard & Thacker, 2013). It is therefore, an important strategy since both organizations and employees' needs are identified. Gould, Kelly, White, & Chidgey (2004) describe needs analysis as the first step in the provision of appropriate continuing professional development. McArdle (1998) points out the importance of this process in saving money, time and effort. In a similar vein, Blanchard & Thacker (2013) argue that when time and resources are spent wisely needs analysis provides a benchmarking evaluation strategy for ongoing development. At the same time it is helpful in motivating teachers who

feel that their request for development opportunities have been heard. Finally, well-conducted needs analysis prioritises teachers' needs and makes it possible both to offer appropriate activities for different teachers and to align teacher' development with the organization's overall strategic plan (McConnell, 2003).

Many studies have been conducted to identify teachers' professional development needs. Shriki and Lavy (2012), for instance, report that Israeli mathematic teachers perceived needs in general were more subject knowledge and effective teaching techniques that would allow their learners to comprehend their teaching better. In contrast, Ibrahim (2012) study in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) with first and second year public school teachers found that new teachers' perceived needs were mostly focused on classroom management, motivating learners, creating attractive learning environment and pedagogical knowledge.

3.6 Models of CPD

Cochrane-Smith and Lytle in Day and Sachs (2004) recognize three kinds of knowledge related to the learning and development of teachers: knowledge generated by research outside the school; knowledge generated from teachers' own practice; and knowledge generated from teaching needs and self-inquiries. Day and Sachs (2004) add a fourth category: reflection. However, it is possible to argue that this category can in fact be subsumed under Cochrane-Smith and Lytle's notion of knowledge generated by experience.

Similarly, Klapper (2001) recognizes several opportunities where teachers can learn through CPD that may include both formal and informal learning. These experiences are: learning through actual teaching; formal training; workshops and

seminars; post graduate qualifications; teaching methodology books; the implementation, development and evaluation of teaching materials, collaboratively with colleagues; peer observation; group discussion; mentoring of less experienced teachers; observation of novice teachers; conducting workshops and presentations about your own teaching experience; materials development; and dissemination of good practice (p21). In the section which follows I set out the most frequent models of professional development.

3.6.1 Initial Teacher Education (Pre-service Education)

This normally starts after completing high school study in higher education institutions (colleges and universities). It marks the point of departure for teachers' professional journeys and has a very strong influence on their teaching performance (Valencic & Vogrinc, 2007). There are some other occasions however, where initial teacher training is targeted at adults, for example CELTA and DELTA certificates. The form and focus of Initial teacher training is shaped by political agendas that are translated into different approaches (O'Sullivan, 2004).

Initial Teacher Education cannot cover every aspect of teaching (Johnston, 1971 in Beauchamp, 1997; Knight, 2002). For example, Wild (1995) demonstrates the limited competence of new teachers in using IT in their teaching. Similarly, Beauchamp (2008), reports that a large portion of newly qualified graduates in England and Wales were unable to meet the requirements for music teaching in the primary classes. Gaps in knowledge of this kind need to be addressed through CPD.

3.6.2 Orientation

Orientation or induction programmes are an important form of CPD provision (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). It is a tool which can help new recruits to transition from students to teachers but it is also valuable for the induction of recently arrived teachers in a school or college, allowing them to familiarize themselves with issues such as the curriculum, the characteristics of the student body, colleagues and regulations (Feiman-Nemser, Schwille, Carver, & Yusko, 1999; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Pignatelli, 2011).

For beginning teachers in the early years of teaching the focus tends to be on survival and management strategies rather than on their students' learning (Kagan 1992 in Langdon, 2011); these challenges are sufficiently great for a large portion of teachers leave the profession at this point. Langdon (2011) discussion of effective induction programmes draws attention to the importance of shifting the focus from survival to core issues in teaching; mentors, for instance, need to acknowledge the main purpose for induction is to promote teaching rather than management skills. Well-designed induction programmes therefore need to for both the needs of teachers for ongoing self-development and for those of their learners. Orientation aims to make sure that both new teachers (newly appointed with no experience and experienced colleagues who are transferred to a new context) feel secure and supported (Haase, Heckhausen, & Silbereisen, 2012; Pignatelli, 2011). Indoshi (2003), in a study of 27 new teachers in Kenya concludes that expectations did not match the teaching reality partly because of the lack of an induction programme. He recommends relating the content of induction programmes to teachers' needs and especially teaching matters. It is worth mentioning that the duration of induction needs to be long enough for teachers to

receive sufficient support as it is likely to last more than a year for teachers to feel comfortable in their posts (Bubb & Earley, 2006).

3.6.3 INSET Training

In-service training – otherwise known as INSET – is generally understood to mean training offered in the course of employment to increase knowledge and skills and thus improve performance. Like orientation, it can be used to address the needs of both new and more experienced teachers (Boulton-Lewis, Smith, McCrindle, Burnett, & Campbell, 2001; Burgess, 1993; Hayes, 1997; Malone, Straka, & Logan, 2000; Wolter, 2000). This training is planned in a top-down way by senior managers in accordance with policy imperatives (O’Sullivan, 2004; Eraut, 1995). Teachers are either brought to a training centre or an expert is invited to conduct training sessions on site. INSET can be short and/or long term; it is cost effective as it can target more teachers in one place with a small number of trainers using materials that can be reused with other cohorts.

Although INSET has traditionally been the main model of professional development and has many advantages (Craft, 2002), it also has pitfalls which have led to the search for alternative ways of supporting teachers. One of the main drawbacks, identified by Eraut (1972), is that it is trainers who identify solutions for problems and there are often no obvious opportunities for trainees to analyse the problems for themselves. Consequently, teachers’ learning may be very limited; as Day (1999), Lamb (1995) report, there was no evidence of change in teachers’ classroom teaching. In addition, INSET in the form of workshops and short term training has little impact on participants’ teaching when they return to the

classroom, and can be considered as waste of time, effort and resources (Fullen & Stiegelbauer, 1991).

Various suggestions have been made for the strengthening of INSET. O'Sullivan (2011) and Lamb (1995) both emphasize the importance of the follow up and, in a similar vein, Lee (1997) suggests that course evaluation should focus not only on short-term but also long-term effectiveness. He proposes involving trainees in the design process and making decisions about their training needs in what Harris (2000) calls 'a participant-centred approach' and Kennedy (2005) refers to as a 'transformative' stage through which professional autonomy might be developed. Training is also likely to be more effective if trainees are motivated and are keen to contribute (O'Sullivan, 2001).

3.6.4 Cascading

Cascading is a form of INSET designed to introduce educational innovation to a large number of schools and institutions whereby experienced teachers and/or trainers cascade a training programme to colleagues in their schools and institutions (Wedell, 2005). In this sense, cascading can be cost and time effective. The fact that it is conducted by a close colleague within the school can also be beneficial, though it can also meet resistance if the colleague in question is not widely respected. Hayes (2000) also points out that there is a real risk in this model that the quality might drop and the goals will not be achieved. Materials date rapidly and risk failing to match the needs of both learners and curriculum.

Wedell (2005) discusses the ways in which unexpected and unplanned circumstances – in his case classroom size, approaches to assessment and the need

to cover the curriculum – prevent cascading from reaching its intended goal. He concludes that effectiveness can be maximized with careful planning and when trainees are involved in the design stage. Mirotsi et al in Hayes (2000) discuss the importance of training which is reflective and experiential rather than ‘transmissive’. Hayes (2000) concurs and also argues that training must be open to reinterpretation (trainees should be thought of as active rather than passive), that expertise must be considered and that “decentralisation of responsibilities within the cascade structure is desired” (Hayes 2000: 138).

3.6.5 Reflection

Reflection before, during and after the lesson is widely recognised as a tool for the development of both teachers and learners (Schon, 1983 in Ghaye & Ghaye, 1998; Regmi, 2009). It involves using what has been gained from past experience to inform current planning. In order to gain and learn from such experiences, teachers need to think critically about what has happened and what has been achieved as the starting point for future development both for themselves as teachers and their learners. Teachers, however, need support to be able to reflect critically on strengths and weaknesses, and how they can solve problems and promote strengths. Critical reflection here means to be able not only to describe what has happened but to analyse and justify such events.

Reflection helps in developing institutions in general and individuals in particular and can ultimately be most cost effective: after initial training, teachers do not need to be taken away from classes but can practice reflection on a regular basis until it occurs spontaneously and automatically.

To relate this to my own experience as a teacher, a supervisor and a trainer, whenever I have asked student teachers to reflect on their teaching, whether before and/or after their teaching, most describe what would happen or had happened, rather than going into more critical details. However, when I have prompted them, they have offered some reflective answers. Examples of these prompts included: What was your lesson mainly about? Do you think that you have achieved your goals? Do you think that your learners have all understood your teaching? Can you tell me to what extent you have achieved your goals? Why do you think you were successful? If you were to teach this lesson again in another class, what would you change and/or develop and why? The use of these questioning techniques encourages trainee teachers to think critically about their experience before eventually being asked to write a reflective report on their teaching.

3.6.6 Mentoring

Mentoring involves the use of more experienced and knowledgeable practitioners to support newly appointed teachers and trainee teachers (Hudson, 2013; Sue, 2006), often through observation of lessons with discussion taking place before and/or afterwards. Mentors can also learn from the mentoring process (Hudson, 2013).

Several conditions need to be considered for effective mentoring, one of which is the “willingness, openness and readiness” of both the mentor and the mentee in the mentoring process (Fischler & Zachary, 2009). Here, a good relationship and trust are essential (Zachery in Fischler & Zachary, 2009; Valencic & Vogrinc, 2007).

Fischler and Zachary (2009) list several conditions essential for successful mentoring:

- Reciprocity is one of the key elements of maintaining successful mentoring process which means the equal specified roles and responsibilities that are taken between both the mentor and mentee. This mutual understanding between both the mentor and mentee enables both of them to exactly specify the purpose from the entire mentoring process.
- Learning is the key purpose from the entire process. If learning does not exist, the process can be less beneficial or even no benefit from it.
- Relationship develops throughout the process but if the relationship is lost, the mentoring process is no longer effective.
- Collaboration is another factor in effective mentoring. Here, collaboration is to some extent linked to partnership and relationship. Both of the mentor and mentee bring to the process their knowledge and experience in order to collaborate to accomplish the task of mentoring. Without collaboration the process's outcome might not be achieved.
- Development is another element for successful mentoring process that is meant to develop the mentee's knowledge, skills and expertise in a systematic way according to a set of goals and objectives until reaching a certain level of development that the mentor will have passed on the appropriate needed experience and skills.

Other important factors include motivation on the part of mentor and mentee, and the mentee's beliefs and knowledge of teaching.

Maynard and Furlong, 1993 in Valencic and Vogrinc (2007) specify three important mentor roles, one of which is an 'apprenticeship' model where the mentor models a particular activity or approach. A second role is the 'competency-based model' where the mentor plays the role of coach. And finally, in the 'reflective practitioner' model, the mentor trains the mentee to reflect on his/her teaching experience. These roles are interchangeable throughout the mentoring process until the mentee achieves autonomy. This is a cost effective process since teachers can perform such roles within their teaching duties. Mentors in addition, need to be well trained in order for the process to take place more effectively.

3.6.7 Teachers' Professional Learning Communities

The concept of community of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991) has been studied in a variety of contexts. In educational contexts, however, it is more appropriate in the present context to talk in terms of professional learning communities, a concept which differs in subtle ways. As Blankenship and Ruona (2007) explain:

The current literature on learning communities ... place[s] more emphasis on the critical roles that leadership and school culture play in the formation of professional learning communities. The communities of practice literature, on the other hand, emphasizes the importance of the social aspect of learning in the formation of new knowledge, and does not seem to place as much emphasis on the role of leaders external to the community or on the culture outside of the community.

Community learning is considered to be one of the most effective approaches to teachers' learning and professional development (Kelly, 2013). Teachers

voluntarily work together in order to learn from each other in a collaborative way (Younger & George, 2013). As in other forms of CPD that need collaboration, for example mentoring and cascading, learning communities require teachers to be committed and supportive of each other (Kelly, 2013). Community learning can be considered as an on-going learning strategy unlike one-off sessions such as workshops and short-term training.

Communities of learning usually take the form of a group of teachers (about four or five) who meet to discuss their teaching strengths and weaknesses. Goals and objectives are set according to needs based on discussion (Kennedy, 2005). Kelly's (2013) study of a learning community with eleven teachers from different schools grouped into three sets suggests that the more teachers are able to show what she and Pignatelli (2011) call 'vulnerability', the more they can gain from community learning. She defines 'vulnerability' as to being able to articulate and share challenges and weaknesses within the group. When teachers can rely on and learn from each other, they inevitably feel more supported. Good and Weaver (2003) also discuss learning communities, pointing out that teachers can be usefully grouped according to similarity of teaching contexts, such as the same level of teaching, the age of learners, the same curricula and, especially, the same background and the same professional development needs. In a similar vein, Younger and George (2013) in a study of a learning community of primary school teachers in Antigua and Barbuda report that, despite challenges such as time, space and patience to share, there was evidence of growth, particularly in relation to students' learning and motivation; the authors stress that this process should be supported by managers rather than monitored.

There are some cases however, where teachers find it hard to learn from such a model. One example of this is when teachers are not able to collaborate with the other members in the community because of the formality associated with the involvement of managers, which inhibits sharing their challenges. Another example is when most of the group members are new to the teaching profession and there is no one who can give sufficient support. A final example concerns the obstacles posed by heavy teaching loads and responsibilities. A very simple solution can be proposed for the first and the second examples by ensuring that the groups are homogeneous in areas such as the curricula and levels taught. The third example, however, requires a modification of teaching loads, something which can only be done by senior management.

3.6.8 Action Research

Action research is another form of CPD where teachers can reinforce teaching practice by introducing a cycle of planning, performing, observing and analysing and reflecting on their teaching (Kemmis and McTaggart, 1988 and McGee, 2008 in Herbert & Rainford, 2014). Action research is considered to be an extremely effective model of CPD since teachers are empowered to critically analyse and make changes to their own practice, their students' learning and even the curricula (Johnson, 2006 in Kayaoglu, 2015).

One of the reasons for the effectiveness of action research is that it creates a professional learning community where teachers can learn from each other by reflecting on each other's practice (Elliott, 1991 in Cain & Harris, 2013). Another reason is that it allows teachers to become critical thinkers, taking responsibility for their professional development and keeping themselves up-to-date with subject and pedagogical knowledge (Furlong & Salisbury, 2005). A final reason is

that reflection and solving daily teaching issues may become a habit supportive of learner-centred teaching (Zeichner, 2003 in Cain & Harris, 2013).

However, when teachers are not well-trained to conduct action research, this may, of course, hinder their ongoing professional development. Bai (2009), for instance, found that it was difficult for Chinese school teachers to undertake action research because of both the lack of training in their pre-service education and time constraints. Motivation is another issue that needs to be considered: if teachers are not willing to participate, either individually or within a group, the outcome is likely to be disappointing.

3.7 CPD Framework

Various theoretical frameworks have been proposed for interpreting teacher learning. Bell and Gilbert (1996) explain the complexity of professional learning process in terms of three sets of inter-related factors: personal factors (including teachers' attitudes, beliefs and values); social factors (including collaboration between individuals and the culture where learning takes place); and occupational factors (including links between theory and practice).

McKinney et al. (2005) propose a quadrant of professional learning opportunities known as Reid's quadrants based on the intersection of two dimensions: formal-informal and planned-incident:

These dimensions represent polarised positions that encompass the range of learning opportunities encountered by teachers. They allow consideration of teacher behaviours, rather than merely emphasizing the delivery style of CPD opportunities.

(Fraser et al, 2007)

Kennedy (2005), in contrast, theorises the professional learning process as a continuum with three main stages; 'transmissive' (influenced and controlled by external factors, in this case trainers, without reference to individual's beliefs, experience and values); 'transitional' (where learning can be controlled either by external forces or autonomously by teachers); and 'transformative' (where learning is autonomously and totally controlled by teachers).

Fraser, et al (2007), in contrast, propose a three lens approach to the analysis of professional development using the frameworks of Bell and Gilbert, Reid and Kennedy (see table 3.1) in order to obtain a more comprehensive picture of teachers' learning processes and create a more effective CPD framework based on collaboration and consultation which recognises them as autonomous learners. Their three lens model, then, incorporates the precise influences (personal, social or occupational) on learning discussed by Bell and Gillbert; the forms of learning (formal-informal and planned-incident) proposed by Reid; and the ways and stages of learning (transmissive, transitional and transformative) explored by Kennedy.

Framework	Terms of categorisation	What is being categorised?
1. Bell and Gilbert's three aspects of professional learning (amended)	Personal/social/occupational	Domain of influence of professional learning
2. Kennedy's framework for analysing CPD	Transmission/transitional/transformation	Capacity for professional autonomy and transformative practice supported by the professional learning
3. Reid's quadrants of teacher learning	Formal/informal Planned/incidental	Sphere of action in which the professional learning takes place

Table 3.1 Summary of frameworks in three lens approach
(Source: Fraser et al, 2007:13)

Its advantages are summed up by Fraser et al (2007: 12): in the following terms:

One of the key reasons for viewing models of professional learning through different lenses is that the impact of professional learning, both positive and negative, cannot be felt or seen in a vacuum. Exploring the site of learning and the individual and profession wide impact allows us to look at individual examples in a much more comprehensive and complex manner. It illuminates ... temporal and qualitative differences ... in relation to teacher learning and professional development.

Fraser et al (2007) explain that this model facilitates the exploration of the impact of different professional development activities on teachers' professional learning and whether or not such activities help the professional development process. For example, if we were to examine cascading using this three lens, the first lens – Bell and Gillbert – would address personal aspects (and whether teachers' beliefs, thoughts and needs are tackled in the CPD activity), the social (whether there is

clear cooperation between participants) and the occupational aspect (whether participants' experiences are linked with the content of the training); the second lens – Kennedy's three stages – allows us to identify cascading as an example of transmissive learning in which participants assume a passive role; and the third lens – Reid's quadrants – places cascading in the formal-planned quadrant and highlights where future action needs to take place.

This three lens approach thus offers a powerful tool for evaluating the effectiveness of current provision in the present study (see chapter five).

3.8 Researching CPD in Oman

Research on CPD in the Omani context is very limited. Al-Lamki (2009) reviews studies of the pre-tertiary level, many of which are unpublished, including Al Bedwawi (2002), Al Masqari (2002), Al Zedjali (2004), Al Nabhani (2007), Al Hosni (2006), Al Ghatrifi (2006) and Al Balushi (2008), and concludes that there is a mismatch between teachers' beliefs and opportunities for CPD which results in teachers' frustration. Professional development at the tertiary level however, has not been investigated.

3.9 Summary

Both the previous and the current chapter provide a context for the present study. The previous chapter emphasised the high priority accorded by the Omani government to education in general and higher education, in particular, in recognition of the vital role they play in producing a well-qualified cadre to serve the country. A gap however, was identified in the context of CAS where CPD appeared to be offered on an ad hoc basis. Although the CAS organization plays a

key part in delivering Oman's policy on development (Ministry of Information,2015), research in this area is extremely limited.

This chapter has outlined the central importance of CPD in the development process, its goals and objectives and the factors that affect its success or otherwise. Various CPD activities were discussed as a background to the discussion of current practice the CAS context presented in chapter five. Various frameworks for the delivery of CPD were presented and it was argued that Kennedy's approach to professional development held particular promise in exploring activity within CAS. I turn in the next chapter to a discussion of the methodology which will guide my investigation of CPD in the CAS context.

Chapter 4 Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on methodology. It starts with a justification of a qualitative research paradigm as the most appropriate framework for my research and the questions that I will seek to answer. It explains my choice of a case study design, based around two of the CAS colleges in Oman, drawing on interviews and focus group discussions with the main stake holders, and documentary analysis of key policies and reports. The research sampling process and the selection of the study participants will be discussed. A general discussion of the ethical considerations will be presented. Next, the process of recording data and recording techniques to the study will be offered, followed by a consideration of the rigour of research. The chapter will conclude by discussing the process of data analysis.

4.2 Research Paradigm

Bryman (2005) defines a research paradigm as “a cluster of beliefs and dictates which for scientists in a particular discipline influence what should be studied, how research should be done, [and] how results should be interpreted”. It is intended to guide and underpin the research components throughout the research journey.

4.2.1 Philosophical traditions

Paradigms can be characterized by their ontology, their epistemology and their methodology.

4.2.1.1 Ontology

Ontology is a word that is rooted from ancient Greek 'ont' that means being which indicates the science of human being and the importance of dealing with its nature (Scotland, 2012). Ontology relates to our view of the nature of reality: realists see this as a law of nature waiting to be discovered; critical realists consider that our presence as researchers influences what we are trying to measure; relativists consider that knowledge is a social reality which we arrive at through individual interpretation. Scotland (2012) states that researchers' ontological perspectives are constituted according to their view to the world and the things they want to study.

4.2.1.2 Epistemology

Bryman (2012) recognizes epistemology as what is regarded as accepted knowledge in a particular discipline. Epistemology is concerned with how knowledge is formed, gained and communicated (Scotland, 2012). It is therefore, concerned with how we know something and whether we are part of that knowledge (constructivist) or external to it (positivist).

4.2.1.3 Methodology

Methodology is the approach that is used to reach the intended knowledge including 'why, what, from where, when, how the data are gathered and analyzed' (Scotland, 2012: 9). Methodology therefore, refers to how we set about finding out answers to a question. There are two main approaches: quantitative and qualitative.

4.2.1.3.1 Quantitative Paradigm

The quantitative paradigm is widely considered to be suited to 'inanimate' or 'nonhuman' objects in the natural sciences (Singleton & Straits, 2005). These objects cannot interact with or interpret incidents in their environment or even within themselves. This kind of research is based on a positivist stance that presupposes and looks for objective reality and the true nature of the world. It is totally separated from social variables. Researchers in this tradition adopt a deductive approach, based on the following stages: theory/hypothesis; data collection; findings; hypothesis confirmed or rejected and revision of theory (Bryman, 2012; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011).

4.2.1.3.2 Qualitative Paradigm

Unlike the quantitative or positivist tradition, the qualitative or interpretivist tradition developed as a more appropriate response to studies of people seeking reasons and purposes for their actions and requiring researchers to understand the subjective meanings of social actions. This understanding comes in the form of a constructivist ontology where researchers consider that "social phenomena and their meanings are continually ... being accomplished by social actors" (Bryman, 2012: 33). Several possible interpretations can be associated with the same

inquiry as opposed to only one unified meaning, since there is always interaction between the inquirer and the social situations or individuals. Researchers in this tradition starts with induction (ideas), and move through observation/findings towards theory/hypothesis generation (David & Sutton, 2011).

The choice of a constructivist ontology and interpretive epistemology for the present study was guided by my belief that knowledge is a social reality, negotiated rather than given (Legard, Keegan, & Ward, 2003), as is the case in realism and positivism. My intention was to interpret teachers' perceptions and thoughts on professional development and explore the subjective meanings of such perceptions. This focus on interpretation had led me to choose a constructivist ontology which recognizes social actors' ideas, thoughts and actions (Bryman, 2012). I needed to understand more about the teachers' beliefs and thoughts in order to gain an in-depth insight into the researched topic (Bryman, 2012; Marshall & Rossman, 2006). In order to answer my research questions, I therefore required a qualitative methodology. As Berg (2004) asserts, qualitative research deals with meanings, notions, definitions, characteristics and description of things. In similar vein, David and Sutton (2011) point out that qualitative research is more suitable when the research questions are open ended and need to gather more information than is possible using closed questions, which is indeed the case for my study (see below).

4.3 Research Questions

Research questions allow researchers to 'explicitly' determine what they want to investigate (Bryman, 2012). They force researchers to focus precisely on a

particular issue or issues (Bryman, 2012) and help them to tackle such issues in a more rigorous manner. Haynes, Sackett, Guyatt, and Tugwell (2006) equate good research with well-formed research questions. This study will be guided by the following main Research Question:

What are the main issues in the promotion of professional development at CAS?

The study also seeks to answer the following specific research questions:

What is the existing provision for CPD at CAS?

What are participants' understandings of and aspirations for CPD?

What are the obstacles to the implementation of effective CPD?

4.4 Research Design: Methodological Approach

4.4.1 Ethnography

Although qualitative research can take many different forms, ethnography is probably the most common approach and dates back to the nineteenth century with the efforts of anthropologists to understand the cultures, and the ways of life of other peoples (Vidich and Lyman, 2000 in Denscombe, 2010; Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). Traditional ethnography is characterized by several features (Burns, 2000; Denscombe, 2010; Savin-Baden & Major, 2013) frameworks. Firstly, researchers need to spend a considerable amount of time within the context that is researched and even partake in the participants' lives in order to collect reliable data. Secondly, sharing lives and

interacting with participants, rather than just observing, is the key feature often allowing access to unexpected and important data. Most importantly, ethnographic data are collected from and within the normal life routines of participants and from their points of view enabling the researcher to better understand their experiences and feelings.

Ethnography, however, has evolved considerably, especially in the closing decades of the twentieth century (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013: 206). Realist ethnography, for instance, seeks to explore the relationship between the rules and regulations that govern societies. It deals with the explanations and descriptions of the events that influence human agency. Post-structural ethnography focuses more on “broader questions related to knowing and being” (p. 206) and, in auto-ethnography, the researcher’s experiences are used to reflect on those of the participants. The particular approach adopted in this study, however, is critical ethnography, where researchers challenge the existing political, administrative, organizational status quo by highlighting the potential for changes and/or development.

4.4.2 Critical Ethnography

While ethnography usually describes what is out there, critical ethnography is more concerned with what could be, and focuses on the developmental aspects of the issue being researched (Thomas, 1993, in Cohen et al, 2011). It normally has a political dimension since it focuses on change and development and not only discovery and interrogation. Critical ethnography was employed in this study because one of the main goals is to develop CPD practice both in the CAS context

(Carspecken, 1996) and in the higher education institutions of Sultanate of Oman and the GCC (Gulf Cooperation Countries).

4.4.3 Case Study

Case study can be best thought of a research strategy rather than a method. While they can be both qualitative and quantitative in nature, or a mixture of both, case studies in social sciences research tend to be qualitative, drawing on a range of ethnographic methods. This strategy was chosen for the present study for many reasons. Firstly, I wanted to study a particular context – the CAS organization – in depth. Secondly, there are six colleges within the CAS organization and a case study approach enabled me to choose two of these to be the focus for the research. Finally, I wanted to explore the effectiveness of the current CPD practice in the CAS organization with the purpose of informing future development.

A case study approach, then, is appropriate because it tackles ‘illustrative’ cases in order to achieve deeper understanding (Hagan, 2006 in Berg, 2004). Berg (2004) identifies case study as research involving gathering sufficient data about an individual, a social setting, an activity or a group in a systematic manner in order to enable researchers to find out and interpret how the subject functions or operates. Denscombe (2007) highlights the way in which case studies focus on the particular; looking at a given case in depth may help to reveal wider implications that may be hard to conclude from looking at a wider context. Case study therefore seeks to collect unique and in-depth information that other research approaches cannot, requiring the researcher to look in detail into a particular setting (issue,

individual, group or institution) to find out about the interaction of “significant factors characteristic” of this setting (Berg, 2009:318). .

Despite the advantages of case study, its limitations should also be considered. One of the main criticisms is that case study research cannot provide sufficient evidence for generalization to other contexts (Bryman, 2012; Burns, 2000; Denscombe, 2010; Savin-Baden & Major, 2013; Stake, 1995). The aim of this research, of course, is to explore issues related to two CAS colleges and not generalization to a wider context. That said, it is hoped that the methodology used in this study will offer sufficient detail for those working in similar contexts to make informed judgments as to the extent to which my findings might also apply to their institutions.

Yin (1994, 2003a) in Yin (2011) and Winston (1997 in Berg, 2009) identify three common designs for case studies: ‘exploratory’, ‘explanatory’ and ‘descriptive’. In exploratory case studies, fieldwork and information gathering is undertaken before defining a research question or alternatively, theory is generated through observing a social phenomenon in its natural setting (Yin, 2003 in Berg, 2009). Explanatory case studies mostly examine and explain a plurality of influences using a pattern-matching technique (Yin, 2003, in Berg, 2009). Descriptive case studies are the final type in which the researcher scrutinizes propositions and questions about a phenomenon that are carefully articulated at the outset. My research project is exploratory, involving an in-depth investigation into English teachers’ perceptions of professional development in two CAS colleges.

4.5 Data Collection

4.5.1 Research Sample

Sampling depends on the type of study conducted, whether quantitative or qualitative (Bernard, 2000; Bryman, 2012). The two main kinds of sampling are probability and non-probability. Probability samples (e.g. simple random, systematic random sample, stratified and multi-stage cluster sampling (Bernard, 2000) are best suited to quantitative studies concerned with generalization. Qualitative studies concerned with seeing the world through the eyes of respondents and describing the context in detail are more likely to rely on purposive sampling (e.g. convenience, snowball, quota, theoretical (Bryman, 2012).

4.5.1.1 Purposive Sampling

Bryman (2012) asserts that, through purposive sampling, researchers select their participants in a strategic way and in accordance with the research questions. The key point in purposive sampling is the selection of units of analysis such as people, organizations and departments with a purpose in mind. In convenience sampling, the researcher starts with participants that are easy to locate. In snowball sampling, the researcher finds people relevant to the topic and asks to be referred to others with similar background and experience. In quota sampling, the researcher determines the qualities of a particular population and creates quota based on those qualities; participants are then selected for each quota. A further distinction can be made between sequential purposive sampling where selection starts with an initial sample and gradually builds up to the point where research questions can be confidently answered and fixed or non-sequential purposive

sampling where a sample is fixed from the beginning stages of the research and according to the research questions (Bryman, 2012).

The present study used sequential purposive sampling guided by the research questions. The focus was on one particular organization (CAS) composed of six different units. For the purposes of this study, the main stakeholders in the organization are: English Teachers, Programme Director, Deans, Head of Departments (HOD), and Coordinators. The English teachers can further be divided into local and expatriate and more or less experienced. Whereas the Programme Director and the Deans, the HoDs and Coordinators within these two colleges were fixed, the English teachers were purposively selected according to origin and experience; the size of the sample was determined by the points that I achieved data saturation: in other words, data collection continued until I felt I had fully understood the issues.

Two out of the six CAS colleges were selected for this research: Rustaq CAS and Sohar CAS. Rustaq CAS was included because it is the only college that offers an ELT degree programme and has the largest English department and is the closest to the capital city (Muscat) where teachers have most opportunities to participate in CPD at locations such as Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) and the British Council. Sohar CAS on the other hand, was chosen because it is one of the farthest colleges from the capital city and it recruits the highest achieving students after SQU because of the Engineering programme and may thus pose different teaching challenges.

4.5.1.1.1 The Programme Director

The Programme Director for English is the person responsible for supervising the teaching and learning processes in the English Departments across the CASs. The Programme Director for English was selected to take part in this study for several reasons. Firstly, his/her responsibilities include teachers' development in the role of decision maker and consultant. Secondly, he/she is involved in designing the CAS strategic plan (and in particular the academic aspects). Thirdly, he/she is likely to be aware of any evaluation and/or future development and finally, he/she is the one responsible for planning and implementation of CPD.

4.5.1.1.2 CAS Deans

Colleges' Deans are directly responsible for the development of their campus both in general and more specifically for the administrative aspects. They are involved in the overall CAS strategic plan and in the production of quality assurance auditing reports. Deans thus play a crucial role in the future development of CAS and in the development of teachers. The Deans included in this study were the heads of the two case study colleges (Rustaq CAS and Sohar CAS).

4.5.1.1.3 HODS and Level Coordinators

As we saw in chapter two, each English department consists of a Head of Department (HOD), and three Level Coordinators (foundation, Year 1 and Year 2). However, Rustaq CAS has four coordinators because of the ELT programme based there. These participants are also likely to be a rich source of information because

their familiarity with the strengths and weaknesses of their teachers through receiving feedback from teachers and students.

4.5.1.1.4 Coordinators

Again, as explained in chapter two, in addition to the Level Coordinators in each English Department, there is also an E-Learning Coordinator, a Module Coordinator, a Quality Assurance Coordinator and an Assessment Coordinator. These coordinators are in most direct contact with the teachers. In each of the two CASs' English Department, these Coordinators were selected to take part in the study.

4.5.1.1.5 Teachers

The CAS English teachers are the heart of this study and were selected according to the following criteria. The first criterion was experience, since teachers with differing levels of experience are likely to have different professional development needs. Those teachers with between one and three years were classed as less-experienced and those with more than three years as experienced teachers. The second criterion is origin (local or expatriate), again because their different perspectives and experience were likely to shape their CPD needs. The final criteria was gender, a variable which has frequently been shown to influence patterns of preference and needs. As we will see in the following chapters, there were often differences between more and less experienced teachers and local and expatriate teachers; there was, however, no evidence of differences between male and female teachers.

The HODs were asked to send the researcher a list of the teachers under these categories. The researcher then selected from the list, attempting as far as possible to ensure gender balance.

4.5.1.1.6 Administrators

As explained in chapter two, the human resource section of the college is responsible for decisions related to CPD training and for liaison with the human resource directorate at the Ministry. Administrators were included in this study in order to ensure that as broad a picture as possible of the processes involved in CPD would emerge from the analysis.

4.5.2 Research Methods

The research instruments were chosen in accordance with the research paradigm discussed above and the aims of the study, namely to investigate perceptions of and beliefs regarding the current CPD practice at CASs. Interviews and focus group discussions were considered the most appropriate instruments for generating data for my study for the reasons set out below.

4.5.2.1 Interviews

Interviews involve interaction between two or more people with a purpose (Kahn and Cannell, 1957 in Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Miller & Glassner, 2011) and are therefore an ideal instrument for collecting deep investigations of phenomena

(Marshall & Rossman, 2006). In social research they are guided by a predetermined agenda with predetermined people.

Interviews offer many advantages. One is flexibility and adaptability of collecting information from the interviewee (Robson, 2003). Interaction between the researcher and the interviewee allows clarification and explanation and the gathering of in-depth and detailed information in order that deeper insight can be gained (Denscombe, 2007). Another advantage is the ability to modify questions in order to get valid answers that cannot be gathered with other instruments (Fowler, 2001). A third advantage is that the researcher's presence may enable them to interpret the participants' non-verbal cues in addition to what they explicitly say. Finally, only simple equipment, such as a recorder, is required.

Nevertheless, there are some limitations associated with using interviews in collecting research data. One limitation is that interviews can be time-consuming. Transcribing and analyzing interviews takes up a lot of the researcher's time throughout the research process (Bryman, 2012). Moreover, large samples are not feasible within the time constraints and bias can result from the smaller sample (Robson, 2003). Bias can also result from the fact that the researcher might consciously and/or subconsciously direct the interviewee to provide a certain answer (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2000). However, I took steps to minimize such limitations. For example, I built up rapport with the interviewees so as to encourage open and honest responses and framed the questions in a way which gave no clues as to expected answers. I also summarized my understanding of the points discussed as the interview proceeded, in order to seek respondent validation for my interpretation of what they were saying. In addition, I asked for

elaboration from the participants to check my understanding of what they said, especially if the point was not predetermined in the schedule of interview questions. Another strategy was to transcribe the interviews as soon as possible after they had taken place while things were fresh in the researcher's memory. Many of the participants were familiar with me as a colleague and were therefore, more likely to cooperate. A final strategy was that the participants were informed of the main topics to be covered in the interviews in advance in order to help them give considered answers.

There are three types of interviews: structured, semi-structured and unstructured (Denscombe, 2007; Robson, 2003). Structured interviews, like surveys, are more likely to ask closed questions (eliciting answers such as 'yes' and 'no') prepared in advance and asked verbatim. In this approach, researchers' opportunities for in-depth exploration of participants' views and opinions are limited. Semi-structured interviews are more open; while the researcher has some control over what is covered, there is also flexibility for interviewees to introduce issues that the researcher may not have considered. Question schedules are prepared in advance, but are not necessarily followed precisely. Unstructured interviews, sometime called in-depth interviews (Robson, 2003) are very open-ended and the interviewer's control is minimized. Here, the interviewees are given sufficient time to talk about the topic in questions with little or no researcher control. The main drawback of unstructured interviews is the large amount of data gathered which may have limited relevance to the research question(s).

Semi-structured interviews were employed in my study because of the limitations of time, and to assure that issues that I had identified as potentially important

were covered while allowing sufficient flexibility for participants to introduce topics which I may not have previously considered. Moreover, since professional development is a broad subject, semi-structured interviews helped ensure that discussion remained within the theoretical parameters of my study. Open-ended questions were employed throughout the interviews in order to explore in depth participants' perspectives on professional development in the CAS context (see appendix F). The open questions that were used for both the interviews and focus group discussions were derived from my research questions, research objectives and the literature. CASs deans and selected participants from the focus group were interviewed in this study as discussed in Table 4.1 below.

4.5.2.2 Focus Group Discussions

Focus group discussions or interviews share many of the same features as interviews discussed above, except that they involve several interviewees at the same time. Merton et al, (1956) in Bryman (2012) make a further distinction between a group interview and a focus group discussion. In a group interview, there are several interviewees who discuss more than one topic with the interviewer, whereas in focus groups participants are selected because they are knowledgeable and involved in the topic and/or issue under discussion.

Focus group discussions have several characteristics. One of the main advantages is that they enable the researcher to observe participants discussing the topic with their colleagues. This enriches the data with a deeper understanding of the reasons for how people feel about the topic (Bryman, 2012; Robson, 2003). The views expressed by one participant may trigger ideas and responses from the

others. This situation often creates opportunities to discover unexpected information. A final advantage is that the researcher is able to sample a wider range of views in a shorter period of time than in one-to-one interviews.

However, there are also many limitations in using focus group discussion, one of which is time constraints: it is not possible to discuss a wide range of questions and typically fewer than ten questions or topics can be covered in an hour (Bryman, 2012). This can be mitigated by ensuring that points are well selected to relate the researcher's focus, and formulated in advance from the literature reviewed and/or from the research questions. Another limitation is that the researcher needs to be experienced in facilitating discussions to successfully gather the required data. For instance, the group discussion might be dominated by specific participants, which might discourage others from giving their point of view. It is therefore, important that the researcher ensures that everyone involved in the discussion is given equal time to contribute. A further limitation concerns the difficulty in assuring the confidentiality of information provided by participants following the discussions. A final disadvantage is that the data from a focus group cannot be generalized. However, as mentioned earlier the main aim of this study is to look critically at the situation in CAS and not necessarily to generalize these findings beyond these institutions.

The size of each focus group discussion is a very important consideration in the research process. Some scholars, such as Bryman (2012), David and Sutton (2011), Robson (2003) and Denscombe (2007), argue that the more participants in the group the better the discussion will be. It is generally considered, however, that the ideal group number is between six and ten participants depending on how a

group is formed. For example, whether the participants already know each other or are strangers. David and Sutton (2011) suggest that, in the case of participants who form part of the same group, the fewer participants the better because they are likely to have a lot to say about the topic.

The selection is also dependent on whether the group is 'homogeneous' or 'heterogeneous' (Robson, 2003). Homogeneous refers to groups in which the participants have mostly the same background, experience and position. This may promote communication within the group and the development of ideas, and may reduce conflicts and encourage participants to articulate their concerns among their peers without anxiety (Robson, 2003: 286). In heterogeneous groups, on the other hand, the participants have different backgrounds, experiences and positions. Within this kind of group, there are many opportunities to enrich the discussion and facilitate the expression of different points of view. However, there are also some accompanying risks, such as difficulties in managing the group and potential conflict between the participants (Robson, 2003). In my research, the participants were grouped homogeneously so as to reflect their levels of experience within the profession, roles and national origins and in order for me to be able to look in-depth into the different points of view within the group. Each group consisted of six participants. The composition of eleven focus group discussions was guided by participants' role (lecturer, coordinator, Head of Department or Level coordinator); level of experience of lecturers (more than or less than five years) and national origin (local or expatriate), all variables which may influence attitudes towards CPD as set in Table 4.1 below. The CAS academic

hierarchical structure and the research instruments used are illustrated in Figure 4.1. The questions which served as a starting point for focus group discussions can be found in Appendix E,

	Rustaq CAS	Sohar CAS	Ministry
Focus Gr 1	6 less experienced local lecturers		
Focus Gr 2	6 less experienced expatriate lecturers		
Focus Gr 3	6 more experienced local lecturers		
Focus Gr 4	6 more experienced expatriate Six lecturers		
Focus Gr 5		6 less experienced local lecturers	
Focus Gr 6		6 less experienced local lecturers	
Focus Gr 7		6 more experienced expatriate lecturers	
Focus Gr 8		6 more experienced expatriate lecturers	
Focus Gr 9	Five Coordinators		
Focus Gr 10		Five Coordinators	
Focus Gr 11	Five Level Coordinators and HODs		
Interview 1	Rustaq CAS Dean		
Interview 2		Sohar CAS Dean	
Interview 3			

Table 4.1. The study participants and instruments

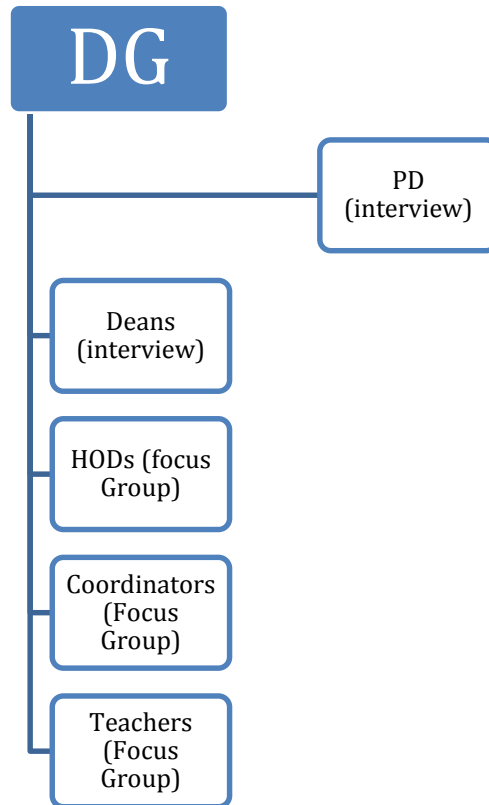


Figure 4. 1: CAS academic hierarchical structure and research instruments used

4.5.3 Considerations relating to both interviews and focus group discussions

Characteristics such as the ethnicity, age, gender, status and qualifications, of the researcher can affect participants’ responses (Cukor-Avila, 2000; Denscombe, 2010). For example, if a male researcher is collecting data from a female institution, in a conservative society, the data probably will not be as reliable as if it were collected by a researcher of the same sex. In a similar vein, if participants are familiar with the researcher, they will probably respond differently than if they did not know them, though the effects of familiarity might vary depending on the nature of the relationship. The topics discussed are also likely to influence the

data (Denscombe, 2010), depending for example, on whether or not the topic is of interest.

In relation to my research, I had dual roles: as an outsider (since the newly recruited teachers were not familiar with me, either as a fellow teacher or as a programme director); and as an insider (since most of the teachers and administrators knew me). As an insider, I had a number of possible advantages including, participants, may, for instance, have been more open in their responses in the knowledge that they, were talking, to someone familiar with their work setting. However, they may also have wanted to please me, by telling me what they thought I wanted to hear. My status as an outsider, however, was also associated with advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, they may have felt more able to be frank about their situation; on the other hand, it may have been more difficult to build a rapport with them.

I took several steps in order to minimize the effect of my role as researcher. Firstly, I aimed to build a rapport with my participants so as to encourage open and honest responses. Secondly, I had spent some time at the colleges where the research was conducted so that they could get to know me. Thirdly, I fully explained every aspect of my research that relates to their involvement (as will be demonstrated later in the discussion of ethics). Fourthly, since most of my participants have higher degrees, they were likely to be familiar with the research process and its value in developing their institution. Finally, I informed the HODs and Coordinators about my research purposes in advance and asked them in turn

to share this information with their teachers, thus minimizing the effects of my presence as a researcher.

4.5.3.1 Audio verses video recording

Recording data from interviews and focus group discussions is important for several reasons (Bryman (2012). It offers many opportunities for a deeper understanding of the data: repeated listening in the process of transcription allows the researcher to focus more on what has been said as opposed to the actual conduct of the interview or other distractions, as well as helping other researchers to evaluate the research by providing them with raw data. However, audio recording also has its limitations, including the ever-present danger that data will be lost or that the recording will be of poor quality. These limitations were avoided in my research by carefully considering issues such as storage capacity, simplicity of usage, recording quality and position (Barbour, 2008). In addition, I aimed to use as a back up three devices (two smart phones and an MP3 player) to record interviews and focus group discussions.

An even more important limitation concerns subjects who object to being recorded; participants may feel suspicious or intimidated, and as a result be less cooperative or forthcoming in their responses. The participants in this study were informed in advance about the interviews and focus group discussions being recorded so to avoid any surprise or inconvenience in the process of data collection. Should anyone object to being recorded in focus group discussions, they were not included but given the opportunity to speak to me on a one-to-one basis,

where I took notes. The same offer was made to any interview who does not wish to be recorded. However, none of the participants declined.

It is very helpful for researchers for interviews and focus group discussions to be video-taped, in terms of allowing for examination of the non-verbal responses and emotions that cannot be detected in audio-recording. However, video-recording carries more complicated practical and ethical considerations. The video-taping of interviews and focus group discussions shares many of the challenges of audio-recording. However, it is more likely for participants to refuse to be video-taped. They often do not feel comfortable and the validity of their responses' might be affected (Barbour, 2008; Bryman, 2012). Finally, there are potential risks with video data being used for purposes other than research. Video-taping was not used in my research because of the potential pitfalls mentioned above, but mainly because I considered that audio data would be sufficient for my analysis which aimed to focus more on content than delivery.

4.5.3.2 Language

The language used for interviews is another important consideration since some of my participants were Arabic speaking. The use of the native language has many advantages, including the promotion of spontaneous and rich discussion (Lam et al, 2001 in Barbour, 2008). Another advantage is to make sure that the questions have been clearly understood, generating more trustworthy answers as a result. A final advantage is that the participants feel free to express their thoughts and opinions without the fear of making mistakes in their additional language.

The use of another language, however, necessitates translation, another very time-consuming process which risks introducing inaccuracies (see below). In addition, the highly technical English terminology used in the workplace may make it difficult for participants to discuss professional issues in their mother tongue. I decided to use English for focus group discussions. This was because most of my participants were native speakers of English and the others are bilingual (English teachers) with at least Masters Degrees from UK and US universities. Arabic was used, however, when interviewing the Colleges' Deans, according to their preference, as their proficiency in English was likely to be lower than that of the English teachers.

4.5.4 Documentary Analysis

Bryman (2012) and Denscombe (2007) identify several types of documents as sources of data including government publications and official statistics, autobiographies, newspapers and magazines, photographs, record of meetings, letters and memos and diaries, though data gathered from such sources are not specifically produced for the social research purposes (Bryman, 2012). Scott (1990) in Bryman (2012) identifies several criteria for determining the quality of the documents used in research. These are the authenticity of the document; its credibility as a free of error and a trustworthy source; its representativeness and comprehensiveness. Research question(s) can be used as a tool for guiding content analysis in order to find out what is required from the document (Robson, 2003).

Quality assurance CASs audit reports, the New Zealand evaluation report on CAS programmes, the latest CAS strategic plan and other related reports regarding

professional development were analyzed and used a source of data for this study. These documents are published on the Ministry of Higher Education website and can be accessed easily. While it is recognized that I cannot make judgments about the credibility, representativeness and comprehensiveness of these documents, analysis was none the less provide valuable context for the one-to-one interviews and the focus group discussions.

4.6 Ethical Considerations

Social scientific research deals with people and their beliefs and behaviours. This requires researchers to consider ethical implications (Berg, 2009; Bernard, 2000; Bryman, 2012; Ruane, 2005). Singleton and Straits (2005: 113) emphasize the importance of research ethics not only in collecting data but throughout the different stages of the research process, from the choice of research topic to the dissemination of the findings. Ryen (2011), writing about ethnographic research, identifies consent, confidentiality and trust as the three main ethical considerations in Western research guidelines. In addition, there are other important ethical principles that need to be considered. These are: accessing the research site, anonymity and harm to participants, confidentiality, informed consent and the invasion of privacy. These principles are discussed below.

4.6.1 Accessing the research site

One of the main principles for ethical consideration is gaining permission to conduct the research. As research projects are generally generated within academic institutions and organizations, gaining permission for collecting data for research purposes requires formal ethical approval. This approval usually starts

with an application to the research ethics committee (Bryman, 2012). When ethical approval for this study was granted by the University of Reading Ethics Committee, a cover letter with an information sheet explaining the nature and aims of the research was sent to the CAS Director General (DG) as the main gatekeeper for the CAS organization (see appendix B). A letter was then sent from the DG's office to the two CASs colleges (appendix B), where the study was conducted. In the context of Oman, the DG's approval of the cover letter was enough to ensure access for my study.

4.6.2 Anonymity and harm to participants

In social science research, the main risk is that the participants may be identified, something which might for instance, adversely affect their professional future (Berg, 2009; Ruane, 2005; Singleton & Straits, 2005). In qualitative research, because the sample population is small, the probability of recognizing the participants is high but can be minimized by assigning pseudonyms to participants. Berg (2009), however, points out that participants can also be identified if information is offered on the site where the research is conducted. This issue was addressed by not revealing the college affiliations of individual participants.

In this study, participants may have in some cases offered comments about current CPD practice at CAS that contradict the view of decision makers. Therefore, teachers were identified in terms of experienced/less-experienced, local/ex-pat and managers simply as coordinators rather than by name. In addition, a consideration of any potential negative impact guided the formation of questions that avoided identifying individuals.

4.6.3 Confidentiality

Confidentiality is closely associated with anonymity; it simply entails preventing the information collected from being accessed by the public (Berg, 2009; Bryman, 2012). Maintaining confidentiality also encourages research participants to be more open and may reduce concerns about offering honest opinions since, in some cases, participants may be critical of official policy (Berg, 2009). In my research context, the participants were assured in the information sheet provided that their contributions would be treated strictly confidentially and only be used for research purposes (see appendix B).

4.6.4 Informed Consent to subjects

Informed consent entails informing the participants about the research including the reasons for their involvement, the nature of their participation, the goals of the study, the consequences of participation, their freedom to withdraw from the study, and the avoidance of unfair inducement and fraud (Berg, 2009; Bryman, 2012; Ruane, 2005). Participants have the right to be fully informed about every aspect of the research that relates to their participation. For this project, as already explained, participants were given an information sheet clearly describing the nature of their involvement along with a consent form (see appendix B).

4.6.5 Invasion of privacy

The final principle of ethical consideration is the invasion of privacy. Singleton and Straits (2005) refer to this principle as participants' right as to when, where, to whom, and to what extent their beliefs, ideas and behaviour will be revealed. This principle is directly linked to the informed consent principle since the researcher is requesting access to participants' professional and/or private lives (Bryman, 2012). Researchers should consider three important issues: the sensitivity of the information being collected (private data should be confidentially treated); the research site (if the data are gathered from electronic surveillance for example without informing the person who is videotaped) and the dissemination of research findings (anonymity is required) (Diener & Grandall, 1978 in Ruane, 2005). In relation to my study, since the focus is on CAS teachers' beliefs and attitudes towards current practice in the area of professional development, they received assurance, as previously mentioned, both in the information sheet and orally at the beginning of each focus group, that the information would be treated in strict confidence. It is finally worth mentioning that, as stated in the information sheet, the data will be deleted from my computer and hard copy consent forms will be destroyed once the research journey comes to end.

4.7 Rigour in research

Rigour in research tends to be assessed in different ways in qualitative and quantitative research. Quantitative research makes judgments in terms of reliability, validity and objectivity. Qualitative researchers work with the

alternative but roughly corresponding concepts of dependability, credibility, transferability and confirmability.

4.7.1 Reliability versus dependability

Reliability refers to the consistency of the results in reaching the same conclusions if repeated within a different context and under the same conditions (Ruane, 2005; Singleton & Straits, 2005). In quantitative research, the same instruments can be easily used within different contexts. Qualitative research however, is guided by different considerations (Marshall and Rossman, 1999 in Ritchie & Lewis, 2003) since it involves people's thoughts and ideas as interpreted by the researcher. In the pursuit of rigour, qualitative researchers therefore prefer to talk in terms of dependability, which stresses the need to account for the ever-changing context within which research occurs and how these changes affect the way the researcher approaches the study. This can be ensured through placing greater focus on the research design process for example, through careful selection of representative samples, by making sure that the participants are given sufficient opportunities to express their thoughts, ideas and opinions and through interpretation that is based on evidence (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003).

In relation to my research, various measures were taken to ensure dependability. The samples in the study had been carefully selected to represent the various stake holders (local and expatriate teachers, more and less experienced teachers, HODs and Coordinators). Several methods (interviews, focus group discussions and documentary analysis) of collecting data for the study were employed, thus ensuring triangulation not only of data sources but also of methods (Berg, 2009;

Bryman, 2012). Finally, careful consideration was given to the questions that were used to collect data in both the interviews and group focus discussions.

4.7.2 Validity vs credibility and transferability

Validity in quantitative research refers to the accuracy and the preciseness of the research findings (David & Sutton, 2011). It can also refer to the research instruments' suitability for investigating the chosen topic (Arksey and knight, 1999 in David & Sutton, 2011; Ritchie & Lewis, 2003), known as internal validity. External validity, on the other hand, refers to the ability to generalize to a wider context from the research findings. Qualitative researchers propose two more appropriate concepts: credibility (which corresponds to internal validity) and transferability (corresponding to external validity) (Lincoln and Guba, 1985 in Denscombe, 2007). Credibility relates to the requirement that the findings are believable from the perspective of research participants. In the present study, I checked the reliability of my interpretation of what was said in interviews and focus group discussions by regularly summarizing what had been said and asking if my understandings correspond with those of participants and by offering opportunities for them to review and, if necessary, revise transcriptions of any data collection in which they had been involved. Transferability was achieved through descriptions of the research context and any assumptions central to the research process, thus, allowing other researchers to evaluate the relevance of the findings to their own contexts (Denscombe, 2010). In the present study, I have offered full descriptions of how I set about collecting and analysing my data. Although the findings would relate to a particular organization, the aim was to

provide sufficient information to allow other researchers to make a judgment as to how sensible it might be to transfer the findings to other settings. Since the CAS context is very similar to other higher education institutions in the Sultanate of Oman, it is likely that the findings will indeed be transferrable.

4.7.3 Objectivity versus confirmability

Whereas quantitative researchers strive for objectivity, qualitative researchers bring their own unique perspectives to the topic under study: they strive rather for confirmability or the degree to which the findings can be corroborated by others. For the purpose of the present study, I have documented procedures for checking and rechecking the data. I have also provided a data audit that makes judgments about the potential for bias or distortion in data collection and analysis.

4.7.4 Insider versus outsider perspectives

I came to this study as an insider. An outside researcher would arguably be less subject to bias and would not bring potential 'baggage' which might intrude on existing relationships with participants. As a former manager at CAS, however, I had many advantages. I was able to easily access potential participants for the study and had a sound understanding of both administrative issues and the teaching programmes on offer. But there were also potential disadvantages. Teachers may have wanted to please me with their answers and therefore may have found it difficult to be honest in their responses. In order to minimize these possible effects I assured the participants that I was there in my capacity as a researcher and I no

longer held managerial post. I also took every opportunity to interact with the participants informally in order to build trust. In order to further minimize bias, I reflected continually on my part in the process.

4.8 Data analysis

The first steps in analysis are the transcription and, where applicable, the translation of the interview and focus group discussion data (Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

4.8.1 Transcription

Interviews and focus group discussions were immediately transcribed for analysis after completion. The type of transcription required depends on the purpose of the research. For discourse and conversational analysis purposes, for example, everything should be transcribed – even the gaps and pauses – in order to allow for accurate analysis (Gibbs, 2007). Other research purposes may require the transcription to be less detailed. Although transcription is time consuming (Bryman, 2012; Gibbs, 2007), it is essential for efficient qualitative analysis (Gibbs, 2007). When researchers transcribe their own data – rather than outsourcing this task to others – it helps them to think critically about the data when repeatedly listening to the recorded conversations (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Davies, 2007; Silverman, 2000). Furthermore, it is easier to access specific information within a transcript than within an audio file (Shopes, 2013) for the purposes of giving supporting quotations. A final reason for transcription is that in the case of data loss, the transcript provides backup data for the conducted and future research.

In this study, I transcribed the conversation myself as soon as possible after the interviews and focus group discussions had been completed in order to increase reliability (Gibbs, 2007). While I transcribed recordings verbatim (see appendix E) I indicated only broad paralinguistic features rather than more detailed linguistic considerations. My focus was on identifying key themes for analysis during transcription (Bryman, 2012).

4.8.2 Translation

Translation is required in qualitative research when the language that is used in the primary data is different to the language used to present the findings. Despite the advantages of using the mother tongue in data collection (mentioned above), translation is a very time-consuming process which risks introducing inaccuracies which may affect the trustworthiness of the findings. In my research, I translated only the extracts used to support my analysis and I have included both the original Arabic and the translation which, as a native speaker, I have provided myself. The translation was given to my Arabic colleagues both in Oman and in the University of Reading in order to ensure the accuracy of translation. Providing the Arabic translation within the text enables Arabic-speaking readers of this thesis to assess the accuracy of my translation for themselves.

4.8.3 Coding

Gibbs (2007) identifies two procedures that can be used throughout the coding. The first is “combing passages that are all examples of the same phenomenon, idea, explanation or activity” in order to examine the information in a structured way.

The second is producing a list of codes that can be used to identify relationships between the codes. He also suggests two techniques for coding: concept-driven and data-driven, based on what emerges from the transcripts, although inevitably this is done with a research purpose (Bryman, 2012). Bryman (2012) advises that the researcher should code the data as early as possible after collection in order to facilitate further clarification and modifications to forthcoming interviews and focus group discussions.

Since this study is predicated on a constructivist and interpretive approach, deep understanding of the subjects' responses from the interviews and focus group discussions is required. The examination of the transcripts started as soon as the interviews had been conducted, as previously mentioned. The coding process started from the first transcript of the first focus group discussions in order to promote the quality of the discussion for the rest of the discussions and interviews (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Wolcott, 1994). The transcripts were categorized according to the purpose of the study, research questions, concepts derived from the literature and from the data itself (Gibbs, 2007). Highlighting with different colours in the sorting process and manual categorization were conducted at the initial stages of the analysis in order to make sense of the data. Comments and notes were written in the margins of the transcriptions in order to understand the data more adequately.

The large number of codes generated in the first stage of analysis were reduced to a more manageable number of themes (see Appendix C). These were derived from the research questions, research objectives, the relevant literature and the data

itself, in consultation with colleagues and my supervisor. Finally, the QSR NVivo software programme was used to assist the analysis process.

4.8.4 QSR NVivo Software Programme

NVivo software is designed to assist researchers in analysing qualitative data such as interviews and focus group discussions after initial manual sorting, it helps to interrelate ideas and to place codes into a 'tree' format in order that the data segments and code connections can be easily retrieved (Bryman, 2012). It is useful for managing big data sets, especially if there are many interviews and focus group discussions, as in this study. The main drawback of NVivo is that it is time consuming to get acquainted with how to use it. In this research, NVivo software was used to revise the manual coding where relevant and produce reports used to structure writing up. Some tutorials were taken from Youtube and there is a group discussion platform as a LinkedIn blog I am a member of. The analysis process using this software was very helpful and saved a lot of my time. The focus group discussions and interviews were all inserted into the programme for the analysis process. Some issues such as restructuring the codes within the software however, were tackled by the support I received from my colleagues (see Appendix C for a list of the codes used in the analysis).

4.9 Summary

The chapter has discussed the research design process, outlining the reasons for adopting a critical ethnographic case study approach, the methods of data collection, including the sampling process, the steps taken to assure the trustworthiness of my data and the ethical considerations which underpinned this

process. Finally, I explained my data analysis procedures. I turn next in chapters five to seven to the findings which emerged from this analysis.

Chapter 5 Existing opportunities for CPD

In this chapter, I describe current opportunities for CPD at CAS, including a critique of this provision offered by external and internal organisations. I then explore the views of both management and teachers to current provision, for the most part with reference to the models of CPD discussed in chapter three. Finally, I evaluate current provision with reference to the theories which underpin this study: the three lens approach of Fraser, et al (2007) (see chapter three), social constructivism and adult learning theory (see chapter one).

5.1 Teachers' professional development in CAS

As indicated in chapter two, His Majesty the Sultan places great emphasis on the importance of developing human resources through specialized training and scholarships, according to needs, in order to contribute to the country's overall development. The Human Resources Directorate in the Ministry of Higher Education plays a key role in this process and is responsible for distributing the budget allocated to employees within the Colleges of Applied Sciences. Academic members of staff, in particular, are eligible for support. For example, as mentioned earlier, as an employee of CAS, my PhD is sponsored by the Ministry of Higher education as part of CAS development. Candidates are nominated in the first instance by the relevant official and normally the final approval comes from the Human Resource directorate at the Ministry.

In the CAS strategic plan (Ministry of Higher Education, 2013), it was stated clearly that one of the main missions of CAS was to provide high quality programmes in order to produce graduates well placed to contribute to the overall growth of the country. In order for this to be achieved, CAS needs to recruit highly qualified and experienced academic staff (see p.69), a major challenge also recognised by the New Zealand team that reviewed the current programmes (NZTEC, 2008). However, issues specifically related to the role of CPD in national development have also been identified.

Prior to the present study, the main critique of approaches to professional development at CAS came externally from the New Zealand consultancy and internally from the Oman Academic Accreditation Authority (OAAA) (for more detailed discussion see chapter two). The external evaluation focussed on the problems created by a high teaching load (NZTEC, 2008). Internally, criticism focused on the ad hoc basis for provision and the overemphasis on attending conferences and one-off sessions, as exemplified by the following comment in the Sohar audit report:

The panel was informed that PD is conducted through the Professional Development Unit in the college in the basis of needs analysis. While its activities receive positive comments from staff as evidenced through post activities surveys, such an approach tends to be ad hoc, as it focuses on specific needs of staff at particular time. Accordingly, there appears to be no thought out strategy relating to the on-going professional development for staff. For academic staff, attendance at conferences and specific IT training seems to be the major for of professional development.

(Oman Academic Accreditation Authority, 2010:350)

A similar observation is to be found in the 2014 Rustaq CAS audit report (p.55):

Planning for these activities however, is not generally explicitly linked to strategic aims or identified needs and systematic evaluation of activities (individually and collectively) is limited. The college reports survey data from 2012-2013 which shows relatively low staff satisfaction with professional development.

(Oman Academic Accreditation Authority, 2014: 55)

5.2 Staff views on a range of approaches to CPD

When first asked about the current opportunities for CPD at CAS, most of the teachers showed a limited awareness of the opportunities available or even the different options for professional development. For this reason, it is not surprising that their responses tended to be extremely limited. When questioned in greater depth about their experiences, however, their comments were more nuanced. The discussion which follows is arranged in terms of induction, training, one-off sessions, professional learning communities, mentoring, reflection, and online learning.

5.2.1 Induction

Induction, sometimes referred to as orientation, is usually offered to teachers either when they are newly graduated or when they have transferred from other contexts (Feiman-Nemser et al., 1999). Like other professional development provision, it aims at developing teachers' practice and learning capacity and minimising teacher turn over (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Thompson, Paek, Goe, &

Ponte, 2005). Induction is an important form of professional development in as much as it allows new colleagues to feel secure and not thrown in the deep end (Pignatelli, 2011). Orientation is also offered to experienced teachers who are appointed to new managerial posts, such as module coordinators, level coordinators and HODs. Induction sessions are usually conducted at the beginning of the academic year to familiarise recent arrivals with the aspects of the new context (such as regulations, culture, curriculum, the learners and teaching approaches).

As discussed in chapter two, induction was raised as an issue of concern in the internal academic accreditation (OAAA) exercise in relation to all the colleges of applied sciences except Rustaq CAS, which was the last college to be reviewed in 2014 was therefore able to learn from the audit experiences of sister institutions. This issue was also explored with the CAS management and teachers in the present study; all participants acknowledged its importance though their attitudes tended to vary.

While the picture which emerged was confusing, there was clearly no comprehensive induction programme. A HoD reported that an orientation programme for new teachers was held in the first week of employment while a dean referred to an induction element in a programme recently introduced for newly arrived members of staff without a teaching qualification:

نعم وهناك الآن موضوع تأهيل أعضاء هيئة التدريس الجدد عندما يأتون إلى المؤسسة إذا لم يكن لديه مؤهل تربوي ولم يكن موجود في الكليات التطبيقية وعندما كنا في كليات التربية كان هناك شرط ان يكون لدينا مؤهل تربوي وهذا الشرط ليس موجودا الآن لكن باعتقادي أن هذا نوقش في الخطة الاستراتيجية وبدا بالفعل العمل وجاري أيضا تطوير التجربة فالأخوة في المديرية في دائرة البرامج بالتعاون مع بعض الكليات التطبيقية وبالتحديد في كلية نزوى قاموا على إعداد برنامج في

[There is a teaching programme for those new teachers who do not have a teaching qualification for about thirteen weeks. Within this programme there is a two week induction programme where teachers are introduced to the CAS context including regulations.]

However, this programme targets only those new teachers who do not have a teaching qualification and not all new members of staff. The dean responsible for this programme described it in the following terms:

وكما قلت هو عبارة عن ثلاثة مكونات. والمكون الأول يكون عند وصول عضو هيئة التدريس ومباشرته العمل حيث يتم اطلاعه، خلال أسبوعين، على جميع اللوائح التنظيمية والأكاديمية المنظمة لسير العمل بالكلية، ويتم تعريفه بالدوائر والأقسام بالكلية وبيئة العمل فيها

[As earlier mentioned, the programme consists of three main components, the first is when the new teaching staff member arrives and starts working, he/she is inducted in two weeks period of time about the CAS bylaws and academic regulations and the college departments]

There was a general awareness that the current situation was not satisfactory. One of the college deans admitted that the induction of new comers was not well planned:

موجود ولكن بشكل جزئي علي شكل دورات وغير منظم محدود ويوجد لدينا برامج مرتبطة بأن عضو هيئة التدريس عندما يأتي نعرفه على مرافق المؤسسة والنظام الأكاديمي والبنية التحتية الموجودة في المؤسسة والأنظمة الالكترونية بحيث يكون أكثر قربا منها ويستطيع ممارستها

[A limited induction programme is offered in our college where new teachers are introduced to the CAS academic system and regulations, the college infrastructure and the IT system we use but unfortunately, these programmes are not well-organized and they are rather limited].

Other participants, however, presented an even more negative view of current provision. In the view of the programme director, no orientation was offered to new teachers: “I am not aware really of any orientation if ever happening to them” while several coordinators expressed concern about the consequences of the gaps in provision:

I think the coordinators, level coordinators course coordinators all teachers to be trained on or at least like be given orientation on the college rules and regulations – what to do if something happens to where to go. I think people feel lost somewhere.

I had never been here to Rustaq when I was appointed, I came to the college looking for the Dean’s office – signs may now is better. I was looking asking people. Actually until I reached the dean’s office, then I asked for the HOD ... so it was like a big story. But I think nowadays they have ... printed out booklet, orientation booklet

We have a big problem here [college]. I don’t know if it is bad as the other colleges. I have been told ... that this department has about one third turnover every year which means out of sixty teachers twenty leave every year.

The comments from the teachers themselves, the most numerous group of potential recipients of induction, were most revealing. Most of the Omani teachers, denied the existence of a formal programme.

I actually joined the college, it was like the second semester and, yes, the HOD he did his job, like explaining things but there wasn’t any orientation
[Local experienced teacher]

The only guidance we got once we got here, it was from colleagues, Omani colleagues who were themselves not very experienced and they were new to the system as well [Less-experienced local teacher]

Some, however, reported that there was an induction booklet but that this was given exclusively to expat teachers: “Actually there is orientation booklet; they did it maybe last year. But you know that thing is only for foreigners”. The ex-pat teachers, for their part, also contested the notion that they had not received a formal induction, making reference to the difficulties they had experienced on arrival.

I don't think we have been given orientation of this kind of thing

OK the first semester, it's been like even walking on egg shells, not knowing how we can discipline, what we can talk about. And we get different perspectives from different teachers. This is the first school I have worked at that we did not have any initial orientation. It's like: here is your textbook, there is your class and go! Do it! So it's been sort of a guessing game for the first semester

However, one of the Omani participants suggested there had been some improvements in recent times and, interestingly, the researcher received an orientation booklet (see Appendix D) which was circulated to all members of staff in February 2015, after fieldwork had been completed, by an Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs at one of the colleges. The booklet apparently was produced by Rustaq, the college praised by the OAAA, as mentioned earlier.

Part of the explanation for this confusion, then, may be the fact that participants were at various stages in their careers at CAS and that practice was evolving.

Their own comments may thus have reflected their own experience more accurately than current practice. The divergent voices of the management team, suggest an absence of overall strategy for induction. The fact remains, however, that all of the participants indicated the importance of orientation programme in introducing teachers to the new context but that, at the time I was conducting fieldwork, this was being conducted on an ad hoc basis.

5.2.2 Training

Training is normally understood as an extended form of formal support offered to teachers' at all levels of experience according to their needs in order to improve their knowledge and skills (Boulton-Lewis et al., 2001; Malone et al., 2000). It is usually planned by the senior management of organizations (O'Sullivan, 2004) and teachers are neither involved in the process of designing the course nor consulted during delivery. It is normally conducted by external experts from external bodies and can be delivered either in-house or outside though, in most cases, it is conducted in outside institutions in order to accommodate a large number of participants.

The senior management were very supportive of this model of CPD. One of the deans, for example, commented:

It is necessarily important to develop the academic staff in academic institutions ... and this can be through training ... and referring to our academic teachers, they are assigned for training sessions related to their major and related to teaching.

As previously mentioned, the same dean had referred to a new programme that had recently been introduced for newly appointed teachers without teaching qualifications, the main component of which was an intensive two week training course. The other dean also raised the issue of budget allocation for training:

فيما يتعلق بالإتماء المهني هنا ك مخصصات لموضوع التدريب بشكل عام وفي بعض الحالات هذه البنود قد لا تكون كافية إذا ما أراد الإنسان أن يتوسع في مسألة التدريب

[Concerning professional development, there is some financial support for training in general, though such support is not sufficient].

In a similar vein, the programme director described efforts to collaborate with an external organization to develop a training programme for CAS teachers:

We have been also negotiating with Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) for ... a one week intensive training course for the assessment coordinators. We finalized everything with them. We had several meetings with them here and in SQU to kind of iron out all the differences and to be on the same base. Everything is set. The team came here and they met our core assessment people. They finalized the content and what they want to be included in the training itself and official letter was sent to them. So we are waiting for their official response in order to go ahead with it.

Teachers also mentioned a range of other institutions with the potential to support the development of both staff and learners. One commented: “We get invited through someone in the university, for example”. The extent of this support, though, is variable; CAS Sohar, for instance, has fewer neighbouring institutions than CAS Rustaq.

Teachers' responses to the current level of provision were mixed. A small number seemed happy with the opportunities on offer. One participant fulfilling a dual role as teacher and coordinator for teaching, for instance, was pleased to be able to attend the intensive training for new teachers with no teaching qualifications 'because my BA was not teaching but in translation'. In most cases, however, teachers were critical. An experienced ex-pat teacher commented: "There is no clear plan there is no vision, no policy. Yes, things happen just maybe occasionally – or I don't know about them". Others felt that the training provided was not relevant to their needs.

We were elected for a course ... the Ministry offers it for us ... it was useless for us as teachers because we already studied Education and other things [Less-experienced local teacher]

Irrelevant! Yes like some sessions we got in the past like promoting their institutions – like the invitation card ... when you go there you find yourself in the middle of promotion sessions, promoting something. So yes we need training ... but what kind of PD is it? Well-planned, well-organized? What does it cover? [More-experienced local teacher]

Still others, reported that they had not received any training since they were recruited. Two of the coordinators, for instance, commented:

For me I was told just to turn to this job but I haven't actually received any training on this particular job. Right now I don't know whether I am doing the right job or not (laughing).

I haven't received any training in this particular job.

In short, training was seen by the senior management as an important component for CPD in the CAS context. However, most of the participants were not happy with this provision reporting that the training offered was neither relevant to what they were doing nor driven by a clear policy of training needs.

5.2.3 One-off sessions

Training can take many forms. On some occasions, it focuses on a number of related topics over a period of time; on others it takes the form of one-off short courses or workshops on teaching innovations that may help the learning process (Day, 1999). Such sessions are usually delivered by external experts away from the school context and not directly linked to learners (Guskey, 2000). They are generally characterized by one-way interaction where teachers are passive recipients of information. Lydon and King (2009) argue that they can be beneficial if they are linked to a certain aspect of a taught curriculum, delivered by well-trained expert with a maximum level of expertise and a well-constructed programme. Teachers in addition, can gain more if such sessions are directly linked to the teachers' needs and context (Lydon & King, 2009).

One-off sessions are the most common current model of CPD in the CAS context. A list of sessions on topics such as strategic planning, risk management and change management (see Appendix A) is circulated to the teachers by the HODs in all academic departments and nominations returned to the HR section in the college which collates a list to be sent to the Ministry for final approval. The Programme Director, for instance, described such one-off sessions in terms of 'a training session, a seminar attended by the teachers, a workshop – whether it is

like designed and organized by an external body coming into the college or the college staff themselves'. She mentioned workshops organized at one of the CAS colleges but attended by teachers from all six colleges 'This year ... we were able to send twelve teachers from each of the colleges fully sponsored by the colleges ... we are having also an upcoming workshop in Ibri (CAS) some time late in April'.

As well as those conducted within CAS, teachers mentioned one-off sessions outside the college, for instance by the British Council and even as part of an international symposium. Topics covered included assessment and writing for academic journals.

Participants in the study were divided in what they felt about the usefulness of these one-off sessions. Some acknowledged their value:

There were a couple of workshops that I participated and one is about writing and publishing journal articles and I think those were the most beneficial ones. [More-experienced local teacher]

The workshop that we had about how to write a proposal ... that was good. Also I think here [the college] we conduct ... e-learning workshops regarding how to use SIS and BB. [More-experienced local teacher]

Next week we are going to conduct workshop on how to use Access Programme for ELT teachers. [More-experienced local teacher]

Others expressed doubt about their value, particularly in relation to the limited opportunities for attending and the relevance of these sessions for their work:

We did receive couple of workshops but still they are not beneficial to us
[Less-experienced local teacher]

I have been here for more than five years and I went to my first workshop
this week. That's the first workshop I have ever been allowed to go to in
five years [More-experienced ex-pat teacher]

We complain that we are organizing workshops and teachers didn't show
up. But who is the speaker? Who is the presenter? Who wants to get
benefit? Who wants to see somebody new? Who wants to see somebody
who has something interesting for us? So we never have these speakers
coming to our colleges. So have you heard of somebody, like very famous
linguists or ... somebody in TEFL? So no – personally I haven't attended
any workshop except once in Rustaq about paraphrasing. [More-
experienced ex-pat teacher]

Interestingly, some participants expressed concern about compulsory attendance
at one-off sessions:

You have to update your knowledge and everything, you know, but it has
to be a voluntary process... it should be for people who really want to go,
not for everyone. Because what if I am not interested in that topic? [More-
experienced ex-pat teacher]

If you say you must do this, then you find that people are – how can I say?
– there is a potential for them being reluctant. My belief is that PD works if
people want it. [More-experienced ex-pat teacher]

The general picture which emerges from participant comments, then, is of the limited value of one-off sessions, particularly when these were not linked to the teachers' needs.

5.2.4 Professional learning communities

In contrast with the more formal approaches discussed so far, professional learning communities allow teachers to learn from each other in a very informal setting (Kelly, 2013) and is widely considered to be one of the most effective types of CPD. Teachers both less and more experienced can work together voluntarily discussing their day to day teaching issues in an informal way and learn from each other in the spirit of collaboration (Kimble et al, 2007 in Younger & George, 2013).

The CAS management emphasized the importance of sharing experiences and generally encouraged teachers to learn from each other. One of the deans, for example, commented:

أنا اعتقد أنه لدينا أشخاص سبق لهم التدريس في جامعات متخصصة بتدريس اللغة وبعضهم يحمل شهادات عليا في ها الجانب وأعتقد خبرتهم التدريسية جيدة إلى ممتازة نتيجة الخبرة الطويلة في هذا الجانب مثل هذه العناصر باعتقادي لو ان هناك عملية منظمة أكثر في المرحلة القادمة يمكن أن تساعد هذه العناصر في عملية الإنماء المهني للأعضاء الأقل خبرة

[Teachers especially the experienced ones (who worked in different international institutions before coming to the CAS organization and who possess high qualifications) are rich source of both knowledge and experience that can be shared with their local and even less-experienced peers]

In a similar vein, the Programme Director recognised the opportunities for informal learning from colleagues, drawing on her own experience:

We taught the same lesson. This is PD: we come back and reflect – I did this, I did that. Did this work with me? This didn't work. How did you do this? How did you teach this? – all of these things, like informal kind of chatting in the common room in the teacher's room can be PD.

She also drew attention to the availability of experienced teachers and the role which they can play within professional learning communities in the colleges:

We have access to over sixty teachers from all over the world and with this wealth of experience and with this wealth of knowledge there should be something going on in the colleges, so the colleges really should not wait for some external body ... the Ministry ... formally to go and saying you have to do this.

Other members of staff also showed an awareness of being part of a professional learning community. One of the coordinators, for instance, talked about her experience on being appointed to her present position:

I was fortunate enough to start coordinating position in October 2013 – so quite late ... But I was fortunate because I received a lot of training from fellow coordinators and a lot of support from fellow coordinators and examples of best practice ... about what should be done and I am really grateful for that.

Some of the teachers, too, gave examples of their understanding and experiences of informal learning:

Maybe if they [teachers] share the same room [More-experienced ex-pat teacher]

It's unplanned [but], of course, sometimes we do [More-experienced ex-pat teacher]

We actually do we have these discussions from time to time, especially for teaching the same course. Dr. A. and myself, we actually have long discussion about teaching writing for example. And there is actually one instance where I am using a specific method to teach the same thing ... he actually came up to me and said, 'OK maybe you can take over one of my classes and just show this". Because he tried something different that works with some of his students ... but I remember I challenged him that this actually worked with some of my students and did not work with others. Yes, there is some sort of interest in learning from each other and we sometimes ... we actually express that intention to learn from each other. [More experienced Omani teacher]

It informally happens for me, for example, I share the office with J. He did that for me he even gave me this social or cultural orientation [More-experienced local teacher]

J. helped me as well ... how the taxis work and things like that or where to get different things. [Less-experienced ex-pat teacher]

However, not all opinions on informal learning as part of professional learning communities were positive. Interestingly, both HODs denied the existence of any form of informal collective learning and commented directly on the obstacles. One of the HODs for example commented:

As I said there is a financial aspect of it's many are not controlled actually OK ... secondly there is no team to organize it actually there is no responsible team or a person or office assigned to apply it ... it's not PD as you said before doesn't come ... it has to be well ahead of strategy that it has to be planned so OK we have six colleges, we have this number of staff ... we would at least a yearly a kind of regular basis even provide them you know PD for teachers you know which I must plan they not only need to think of sending teachers and what is the criteria decide what are the criteria to select ... second thing is not availability of resources for PD of the recipe they always have to depend internationally ... externally to bring team which means there is also I think proper course and legal issue for example you want to making a subject let's call internationally the ministry responds us to do approval so there is also natural delay... secondly also some of the teachers they are not well-educated in term of PD [laughing] some of the new teachers they are still thinking about they are trying to understand this concept of PD they are not aware actually what do I need?

Some teachers offered explanations why they were either not willing or able to learn from each other:

Some people (teachers) are not interested [More-experienced local teacher]

Sometimes we don't have time. People don't have time. They are busy doing other work [More-experienced ex-pat teacher]

I remember once ... there was a problem with a new colleague and I had the initiative, not because I wanted to show him that I am more experienced or better than him. But it was really ... very critical issue and it was rather maybe about to be taken to – let’s say – to the administration to discuss the problems of this teacher. So I had the initiative to say I want to sit and ... talk to you about how, for example, to help him how to sort this problem when teaching, when dealing with students ... He said “yes” but later on I felt as I really had established a barrier between us. All the teachers became very sensitive. [More-experienced local teacher]

In short, awareness of the potential of professional learning communities within CAS was variable.

5.2.5 Mentoring

While professional learning communities involve informal, incidental learning among colleagues, mentoring involves a more structured approach, in which less-experienced teachers are guided by more experienced colleagues (Kelly (2013). Hudson (2013) describes mentoring as an interactive process where both the mentor and mentee learn from each other, albeit in an informal setting. Opportunities for learning and development, the importance of cooperation and collaboration and good relationships between the mentors and mentees are all factors that need to be considered in any successful mentoring process (Fischler & Zachary, 2009).

There was certainly awareness of the potential of mentoring as part of CPD at CAS from both senior management and teaching staff. As the Programme Director

and one of the CAS deans indicated, each college has a large portion of well-experienced teachers who can be used for CAS teachers' professional development.

Many of the teaching staff were in agreement: one less-experienced ex-pat teacher, for instance, commented on this valuable potential source of development: "We have valuable teachers with lots like expertise and experience", while an experienced local teacher acknowledged: "We have a lot of teachers from different backgrounds. They have taught in other colleges or other institutions so ... we can benefit from their experience".

In practice, however, the current opportunities for mentoring are limited. One of the college deans reported a recently introduced programme for new teachers at CAS context which teamed newly graduated teachers with experienced teachers for a fixed period of time:

داخل الكلية ولمدة فصل كامل، يكون عبر إلحاقه بزميل ممارس من ذوي الخبرة في الكلية بحيث يحضر معه حصص مشاهدة، ويمكنه كذلك حضور حصص مشاهدة لأعضاء تدريس آخرين

[New teachers are teamed with very experienced teachers in a mentoring process for a period of a full semester].

This programme, however, as mentioned earlier, only targets local teachers who do not have teaching qualifications. One of the CAS HODs provided further detail:

The mentoring process takes place after the orientation week ... They are assigned [to someone so] they know who is going to mentor. And also there is flexibility that they can even choose ... you know the gender factors and so on.

It appears that, historically, there had been some limited attempts at mentoring. One of the more experienced expat teachers mentioned that in her college: “We used to have [mentoring] and it’s a kind of disappeared where we had mentors each of a new teacher”. Others suggested that although mentoring was not conducted systematically, there were some individual attempts. One commented: “It is done on ... an ad hoc personal basis”. Another offered the example of sharing teaching materials: “The West guys they will give them even their lectures, their slides. So this is how the mentor system has gone down”. Here, then, there is a clear overlap between mentoring and communities of practice.

Most teacher comments, however – from Omanis and expats – underlined the extremely limited opportunities for mentoring. One of the more experienced Omani participants commented: “They [newly appointed teachers] are thrown in the classroom without any guidance without nothing, without observation, without mentoring, without anything, forever (laughing)”. Less experienced expat teachers echoed this sentiment. One of them reported that: “In terms of our college, so far I think it’s zero. I don’t think it happens ... I have never really seen it”. In a similar vein, a less experienced Omani colleague described his disappointment at the lack of support on his arrival at CAS:

I put in my mind once I came I was expecting to ... sit ... at the back the class where some experienced teachers are giving some classes, for example, for one two three weeks until I feel like I am ready to start

Less experienced Omani teachers complained they had been assigned as mentors when they themselves had been assigned had very little experience:

Last year I think they tried to do the mentoring thing. You remember (pointing to his colleagues) we were mentors for other teachers ... but we had less than a year's experience and we were assigned as mentors ...that was stupid (laughing)

The only opportunities for observation reported were for the purposes of probation rather than mentoring in the three months following appointment:

If you have it [mentoring] it's like observation. Every year we get ... from seven to ten new teachers so normally, because I am foundation new coordinator, so I have to go and observe and ... we do actually pass them some of feedback and notes at the end of the session. But how serious they take those? ... It just becomes a routine to do it, to be honest, it's not helping ... the evidence that it is only a routine [is] the fact that you only do it once. [Coordinator]

As experienced teacher, in terms of mentoring, OK – what they usually do they ask the coordinators to go and attend one session with them, one class to observe them. The practice is you just observe and tell the HOD ... evaluative observation (Experienced Omani teacher)

In spite of these evident weaknesses, there was an awareness of the potential to embed mentoring at CAS subject to certain provisos. An experienced expat participant commented: "If this mentoring was to be redesigned, rescheduled, re-planned, it goes as an incentive into my appraisal system".

Most of the participants in the study, then, acknowledged that while mentoring is an important developmental process for new teachers, it is not conducted in the

CAS context in a very systematic and well planned manner, pointing to the potential benefits for the individual and the wider CAS community.

5.2.6 Reflection

The first three of the approaches I have considered – induction, training and one-off sessions, depend on input from others. The next two approaches – professional learning communities and mentoring – involve more informal collaboration with colleagues. Other approaches, in contrast, can be undertaken by teachers in isolation. Reflection, for instance, is one of the most effective tools for individual development particularly when teachers are able to analyse, evaluate and refine their thoughts and ideas in relation to their teaching practice (Brookfield, 1995 in Florez, 2001), leading to teacher development and hence better teaching performance. The more reflection is conducted, the more spontaneous it becomes, though some training is required in order for reflection to take place effectively. Effective reflection, in addition, requires intrinsic motivation on the part of teachers with a real desire for development.

The senior management of CAS were supportive of individual development of this kind. One of the Deans, for example, saw the potential for development through reflection on teachers' day-to-day classroom activities. The programme director, however, was well aware of the role of motivation in this process: "Unless the teachers feel that they need it nothing can be happening".

Reflection was mentioned anecdotally both directly and/or indirectly by some of the participants:

I don't [do] it regularly but ... I have a diary where I self-analyse what I do. So when something goes well and I am satisfied with the results, I write it down so that I can continue. If something goes bad, I ask myself why?
[Less-experienced ex-pat teacher]

Others had experience of reflection in other contexts but not at CAS:

We used to do it weekly when we were studying [on the] MA. We used to reflect weekly and used my experienced in the Middle East College. After each class we had to go to the site and put our reflection after each class. Or let's say there are two classes, three classes to the same day: we have to put three reflections for the classes ... but yes we benefit from that, we know our weakness. [More-experienced Omani teacher]

Still others recognised the importance of reflection in their development but indicated the need for support to develop this practice: a less-experienced local teacher commented: "Reflection of course is another thing ... we need some support about reflection".

5.2.7 Online learning

Online learning, like reflection, offers a more independent route to professional development (Forsberg & Wermke, 2012) as acknowledged, for instance, by the Programme Director:

There are numerous opportunities, especially now with the internet. I don't think anyone can possibly say that I don't have any chance. Go online and you will find dozens if not millions of chances in order for you to learn.

Most of the teachers (both ex-pat and local) echoed this sentiment:

Because nowadays with the internet or technology you can improve you can read and learn a lot of things ideas yah information ideas skills whatever [experienced local teacher]

I myself always when there is a query in mind I go to the internet and find things even for a word or grammar or ideas about teaching and other things. [Experienced local teacher]

I mean personally we do it we can access to journals [experienced ex-pat teacher]

I also like this interactivity and feedback from others from colleagues basically so what I did was to go online to forums where other teachers from you know [less-experienced ex-pat teacher]

Online learning, however, depends on two basic requirements: teacher motivation, and particularly intrinsic motivation (Bassett-Jones & Lloyd, 2005), plays a vital role, as does a high speed connection. While teacher motivation would appear to be high, issues around connection speed will be discussed in chapter seven, which considers the main obstacles to implementing change.

5.3 Summary

Teachers in the CAS context are provided with limited opportunities for their continuing professional development. While the senior management is very supportive of a wide range of models of CPD in principle, in practice, there is no coherent policy for delivery.

The most common form of CPD in the CAS context was one-off sessions, though this was seldom linked to the perceived needs of participants. Both orientation and training, like the one-off sessions, were conducted on an ad hoc basis where such sessions were not directly linked to either teachers' needs or preferences.

Mentoring, professional learning communities, reflection and online learning were found in the CAS context only occasionally and this was mainly because of limited awareness of their usefulness and the lack of support for implementation. Teachers at all levels, however, acknowledged both directly and/or indirectly the importance of these activities in the development of the learning and teaching processes and were for the most part keen to learn.

It is helpful now to apply the three lenses approach discussed in chapter three. Let us look first at the Bell and Gilbert (1996) framework which explains the complexity of professional learning process in terms of three sets of inter-related factors: personal factors (including teachers' attitudes, beliefs and values); social factors (including collaboration between individuals and the culture where learning takes place); and occupational factors (including links between theory and practice). Current opportunities for CPD in CAS mainly take the form of induction, training, one-off sessions; very little emphasis, then, is placed on personal, social or occupational dimensions. Some attention, however, is paid to social factors in the limited examples of staff participating in mentoring activities and professional learning communities, and to occupational factors in the small number of examples of online learning.

In the case of the second lens, Reid proposes a quadrant of professional learning opportunities based on the intersection of two dimensions: formal-informal and planned-incidental. Induction, training, one-off sessions clearly fall into the

formal planned part quadrant, controlled by outsider (trainers) where teachers are passive participants. The limited instances of mentoring and professional learning communities fit in the planned-informal part and online learning in the informal-incident quadrant.

The final lens, proposed by Kennedy (2005), theorises CPD as a continuum with three main stages; 'transmissive' (influenced and controlled by external factors, in this case trainers, without reference to individual's beliefs, experience and values); 'transitional' (where learning can be controlled either by external forces or autonomously by teachers); and 'transformative' (where learning is autonomously and totally controlled by teachers), Most current provision can be characterised as transmissive, while the rare examples of mentoring and professional learning communities as transmissive and online learning as 'transformative'. In short, the CPD activities can be described as paying minimal attention to personal, social or occupational factors; as formal and planned; and as transmissive.

It is also useful to consider these findings in the light of social constructivism and adult learning theories, as discussed in chapter one. Because most of the CPD opportunities at CAS involve transmissive learning, they fail to address, for instance, the role of reflection in learning, a central concern of constructivists who see the need for teachers to continuously make judgements about what has happened, why it has happened and what has been achieved in order to develop further. Similarly, adult learning theory raises doubts about the effectiveness of current approaches. As mature learners, teachers need to know about the process they are involved in so that they can take conscious control; by the same token, they do best when they are faced with problem solving in real life situations. The

models of CPD which correspond most closely to these criteria are poorly represented in current opportunities for CPD at CAS. I turn next to participants' understanding of CPD.

Chapter 6 Understandings of CPD

In chapter five, we looked at participants' previous experience of CPD. In the present chapter, we will consider participants' understanding both of the purposes of professional development and its importance for their own teaching practice, drawing on the interviews and focus group discussions with participants and relating their views on the subject to the relevant background literature. The examples which follow are based partly on responses to questions posed by the researcher and partly on the spontaneous comments offered by participants. As such, an absence or paucity of comments is likely to reflect the relative importance attached to a given topic.

6.1 Purposes of CPD

Six main issues emerged in relation to participants' understanding of professional development: capacity building; keeping teachers up to date; the development of teaching skills; adaptation to change; the notion of professional development as a process; and professional development as self-development. A point of particular interest will be any differences that emerged between more and less experienced teachers or local and expat teachers.

6.1.1 Capacity building

According to the Glossary of Educational Reform (<http://edglossary.org>):

Educators typically use the term capacity in reference to the perceived abilities, skills, and expertise of school leaders, teachers, faculties, and staffs—most commonly when describing the “capacity” of an individual or school to execute or accomplish something specific, such as leading a school-improvement effort or teaching more effectively. The term may also encompass the quality of adaptation—the ability of a school or educator to grow, progress, or improve.

In the present study, local participants clearly recognised the importance of professional development for capacity building. At the management level, there was unanimity among the programme director, deans, HR, HODs and coordinators that professional development is fundamental for institutional development. The programme director, for instance, was clear that “PD is really one of the key aspects into the development of the teachers, in particular, and the institution, in general”.

While a question on capacity building was included in the interviews and focus group discussions with members of the management team, this issue was not specifically raised by the researcher. It is noteworthy, however, that while a number of the local teachers spontaneously introduced the topic of capacity building in focus group discussions, expat teachers made no reference to this question. Local teachers raised a number of related issues:

I would agree that an institute, that having PD will be like higher and it will increase its level of the quality ... the quality [of] the institute will be increased radically year after year [More experienced]

I think professional development is very necessary in every institution, every learning institution. [Less-experienced]

Professional development is important for personal development of the staff plus the whole institution [More-experienced]

You try to develop yourself and your institution whenever there is a challenge [More experienced]

Capacity building however, was not mentioned spontaneously by the expat teachers (either the more or less experienced), possibly because their motivation was related more to personal goals than a longer-term vision of the need for institutional development. That said, there can be no doubt as to the importance attached to the role of professional development in capacity building on the part of the management and local teaching staff.

6.1.2 Keeping teachers up to date

Advances in technology (Appleyard, 1996), generational differences (Jones et al., 2010; Waycott et al., 2010) and developments in our understanding of teaching and learning (Snoek & Moens, 2011) all create the need for the updating of both subject content knowledge and pedagogy. Teachers are required to be open to change, to source new knowledge, analyse their teaching practice, understand their beliefs and values and share their teaching experiences with their colleagues (Richards and Farrel, 2005 in Munoz, 2007). Keeping up to date in the present study relates to any kind of information that supports the learning and teaching processes in the CAS context. This knowledge is changing particularly in response to international influence.

The vast majority of the participants agreed that PD is a tool for keeping teachers updated both about the changes and development in the world and the changes and development in the CAS context. The programme director, for instance, commented:

Knowledge changes and the teachers need to be kept abreast with all what's happening in the field. I mean, for example, a new ... buzz word is the using of technology or using of online modules and sometimes not even needing the teacher to be in the classroom – all of these things. Unless the teacher keeps abreast with what's happening and update his knowledge, his skills ... but if the teacher really wants to be into the future and into the 21st century then he wants to be continually work on himself to be professionally developed throughout....

Teachers also recognised the need for PD for keeping up to date. One of the more experienced expat teachers made a similar point:

There's always new innovations coming forward that you wouldn't be aware of ... especially in this kind environment in Oman where there isn't many outside influences ... so I think maybe yes, professional development is key and it also keeps the teachers fresh, keeps the teachers on the ball and gives something new for the students as well...

There was widespread agreement that CPD was important for keeping up to date with both subject and pedagogical knowledge. Typical comments included:

To have updated knowledge about different topics is very necessary because you need them in writing and reading [less-experienced Omani teacher]

Yes it is to progress, to be updated, more updated, more progress to improve the quality of the work. Of course ... so unless PD is there, is taking place,

right, people will not develop ... professionally. [Less-experienced ex-pat teacher]

IT was singled out as area of importance for updating, particularly among more experienced expat teachers whose IT skills were likely to be less well developed than those of their younger colleagues. Several of these more experienced teachers offered anecdotal evidence of the usefulness of attending an IT workshop. For example, one reported:

I have updated my computer skills absolutely. I felt it was a beneficial course ... I have updated my Power Points and ... I have discovered that I can actually take screen shots on my computer.

Another closely related area, which particularly attracted the interest of the more experienced teachers, was the importance of maintaining credibility with the younger generation of students in their classes. Comments from more experienced local teachers included:

... even we are dealing with students, different students. We can find differences in the individual so we have to at least to get updated things related to different generation. We will not be restricted and the theory of the new generation ...

If you just keep to what you have you will be so behind in terms of what's happening in your field, in your area ... generations change and everything changes ... sometimes one method will not work within the same classroom ... if you are teaching 25 students something might work for ten of them 15 ... so yes, there is a need for PD to grow

Some of the more experienced ex-pat teachers made a similar point:

I think teaching is a life-time job like you are doing it for long years and the learners generation changes from time to another and if you keep your old fashion style of teaching your learners will lose interest in you. It's like an actual acting on a stage for a different audience and ... playing the same role so will be boring. So we try to develop in order to catch up with our learners otherwise we will be left behind because they are quick learners, smarter. Thanks to technology they know more things today. So we need to show that you are still the teachers, the ones who also are a source of knowledge for them.

[The knowledge] you are selling to students keeps on changing quite fast and you have to get to a place with this. So you have to keep on improving yourself otherwise you will feel outdated and you cannot survive as a lecturer....

Thus while all participants recognised the importance of PD for the updating of skills as part of the professional repertoire of teachers in the twenty first century and in response to global development, the more experienced teachers were particularly aware of the need to improve their IT skills and to keep pace with a younger generation of students in order to maintain credibility.

6.1.3 Development of teaching skills

It is generally acknowledged that one of the main goals of professional development is the promotion of teaching skills (Dash, Magidin de Kramer, O'Dwyer, Masters, & Russell, 2012; Day, 1999). Teachers' development may lead to improved teaching and, therefore, learning outcomes (Blank & de las Alas, 2009; Gewirtz, Mahony,

Hextall, & Cribb, 2009; Villegas-Reimers, 2003). Teachers' knowledge encompasses a wide range of issues, including knowledge of content, teaching, taught curriculum, students, the 'educational context' and 'educational ends' (Shulman, 1987 in Pennington, 1994: 398). Professional development is a tool that covers the gaps in previous study and serves as a tool for updating teachers' knowledge including subject and pedagogical, both intentionally and accidentally (Wermke, 2012).

Participants at all levels recognised the importance of CPD for development in this area. The programme director, for instance, commented that CPD:

... should influence the teaching process, the philosophy of the teacher, the use of technologies – all of these things – and, of course, once these things are changed, modified, improved, this will influence the teaching practice hopefully ...

This sentiment was neatly encapsulated in the observations of one of the less-experienced local teachers:

If I have someone who guides me and who encourages me and who tells me the right ways to do my job, of course I will improve myself first and learn from him and that would have an effect on my students. Yes if I have, for example, good ways of dealing with students and good ways of explanations, some ways that help me to create extra materials for the students, of course this would help and have an influence on the students and the students' level will change by the time according to my way of teaching.

One of the more experienced ex-pat teachers drew attention to the particular challenges of teaching in the context of higher education:

In terms of PD in a higher education context it's quite a thorny issue because we are not only teachers here but we are lecturers in here and seminar leaders. And the roles are quite different. And there is a difference between the profession that we aspire to have and that which is on our job description. There are quite a variety of skills....

Other more experienced teachers singled out as important "things like the psychology of learners ... knowledge about this psychology and [student] ways of thinking, individual differences"

Thus, while all participants recognised the importance of CPD in the development of teaching skills and the relationship between good teaching and successful outcomes, their initial understanding of these issues was relatively superficial.

6.1.4 Adaptation to change

Adapting to change is another important objective for professional development. Teachers need support to adapt to a wide range of issues, including educational reform, and changes in curriculum and teaching methodologies (Fraser et al., 2007; Kennedy, 2005). Cultural knowledge is an important dimension essential for adaptation and functioning well in a particular teaching context (Eraut, 2009), which requires the orientation of new teachers, enabling them to socialize with their peers.

The vast majority of the participants in the present study either directly or indirectly agreed that CAS teachers would benefit from PD to help them adapt to change. One of the Deans was particularly concerned with the need for teachers to familiarize themselves with institutional requirements:

الأمر البالغ الأهمية أنا اعتقد ان تكون التنمية المهنية لعضو هيئة التدريس مخطط لها كما قلنا وأن تكون عملية تراكمية ومستمرة داخل القسم ما أعتقد به شخصيا ان الوصول لهذا المستوى من شأنه أن يحدث نقلة نوعية لأعضاء هيئة التدريس في اكتسابهم للمهارات

[Training them about our CAS organization, what we need them to do. Making a strategic plan tackling this development will, of course, enhance our colleges in general].

In a similar vein, a participant in a HOD focus group discussion highlighted the need for CPD to inform teachers about changes in the CAS context in order to perform as required:

So when they come to context specifically CAS we need to make them aware of the requirements of the system of CAS, of the Ministry of Higher Education's requirements

A less-experienced local teacher indicated that he needed to adapt to change in order to support his learners. One of their more-experienced local colleague also commented: "It is important to cope with the changes around the world," while another emphasised the importance of exposing teachers to PD provision in order for them to be able to function well, making the analogy with other work situations:

Put it on this way if you are engineer, for example doing mechanical engineering and graduated from SQU [Sultan Qaboos University] and then going all the way to one of the companies to work, of course you need ... training, you need ... PD you know sessions in order to adapt yourself to the work environment. The same thing as teachers here we get training – theoretical and practical training – wherever we are studying and then when we join the college, even when I joined this college here, I felt that I need

some training, some kind of PD or you cope with the system with the running system here in the college, so I think it's very important

The expat teachers (both more and less experienced) were especially concerned about support in relation to the culture shock they have experienced as regards to both their work with CAS students and also their new environment. One participant mentioned:

I think it is very important to, say, at least to familiarize yourself with methods, with the history of education, with the direction of education, with curriculum, with the past, the present and all those things ... very important, otherwise we miss a lot of things as we are still learning attitudes, especially of the Omani or the Middle East students

It is clearly important that PD should be based on the perceived needs of the teachers themselves.

6.1.5 Professional development as a process

Professional development is conceptualized as a process through which teachers are able to take advantages of opportunities for CPD throughout their teaching career (Munoz, 2007). This process starts once teachers graduate and continues throughout their teaching journey (Villegas-Reimers, 2003). This notion of professional development as a process was widely recognised by participants in the CAS context.

The vast majority of the CAS management (Deans, Programme Director, HODs and Coordinators) acknowledged that professional development is a process rather than an event. One of the CAS Deans perceived teachers' professional development as:

الأمر البالغ الأهمية أنا اعتقد ان تكون التنمية المهنية لعضو هيئة التدريس مخطط لها كما قلنا وأن تكون عملية تراكمية ومستمرة داخل القسم

[A process of accumulative learning episodes that continuously occur in the department]

Some HODs provided full support for this view:

....it also gives a sign of hope that you are progressing. They ... started this job with this kind of knowledge and experience and now we are giving you more chance to expand that knowledge and experience. So that what PD normally does.

An interesting issue emerged, however, in relation to the entitlement of local and expat teachers to ongoing opportunities for CPD. One of the deans was clear that there was in fact no distinction between the two groups:

أريد أن أقول أنه قد تبدو المقارنة بين العمانيين وبين الوافدين في ما يتعلق بموضوع الإنماء المهني فيها نوع من المقارنة الغير موضوعية لأنه لو عدنا للائحة التنفيذية سنجد أنه لا يوجد عندنا محددات لموضوع الإنماء المهني بالنسبة لعضو هيئة التدريس

[I want to say that the comparison between Omani and ex-pat teachers concerning professional development is objective because there is no obvious budget for expat teachers' development in the CAS Bylaws and regulations].

This was, however, a matter on which opinions were divided. One of HODs, an English department manager, expressed the view that local teachers should be entitled to more CPD opportunities "because they will be the ones who will remain for a longer time and the organization can be benefit from this".

This was also an issue for the ex-pat staff with seven of the twelve more-experienced teachers considering that most formal opportunities for PD were offered to local teachers. One member of this group expressed their disappointment thus: “We don’t have any opportunities, basically none. Unless we develop ourselves, nothing happens. You know, all the opportunities go to the Omanis”.

There was also some dissatisfaction with ongoing opportunities on the part of local teachers. Some of the more experienced members of this group considered that this issue needed greater attention. One commented:

...that the process of PD over here (the college) is not systematic. I mean, as A. said, just ... from time to time they invite some people to do something, that’s just to write it in their reports.

It is perhaps noteworthy that the notion of CPD as an ongoing process was not mentioned by the less-experienced teachers, local or expat. This was arguably because of the lack of teaching experience in these groups.

6.1.6 Professional development as self-development

Self-development in teaching refers to individual initiative and self-motivation whereby teachers are able to learn from their own experiences and any opportunities for self-learning (Bezzina & Camilleri, 2001; Villegas-Reimers, 2003). Minott (2010) describes this kind of self-directed development to be more effective than development controlled by others, as, for example, in INSET training. Self-development, in addition, can be thought of in terms of any aspect of teacher improvement in day-to-day work routines (Day & Sachs, 2004), including familiarity with the institutions’ rules and regulations. For example, some institutions use software as part of the induction of new members of staff.

The Programme Director highlighted the important role of personal philosophy in the process of self-development:

... when it comes to ... PD in the colleges ... it depends on the teacher's own personal willingness and initiative in order to look for opportunities out there in order to be professionally developed ... these opportunities again can be either formal ones or even informal ones ...

This sentiment was echoed by one of the Heads of Department who similarly saw the need for individual teachers taking personal initiative for their own development. One of the more-experienced expat teachers further endorsed this understanding:

...because you have to update your knowledge and everything you know, but it has to be a voluntary process so if, for example, we are going to... have these kind of workshops it should be for people who really want to go, not for everyone...

By the same token, a less experienced expat teacher commented:

It's extremely important about career development, regardless of to the level of experience or culture background. I would also agree that it's a highly self-motivated and it's a philosophical issue that depends upon our estimation of our abilities or willingness to engage with others and improve ...

There was a general awareness both of the scope of CPD and the ways in which participants could take responsibility for their own development. Typical comments included:

PD is not just about the teaching. I guess there are other things that we do in our offices, like reports and ... entering marks. All of this are part of PD. [less-experienced Omani teacher]

PD is not only with teaching. It's actually with everything related to the college [More-experienced Omani]

I believe it's a matter of individual motivation and I tend to think of a cocktail of opportunity that goes beyond workshops and courses [Less-experienced ex-pat teacher]

The focus group discussions included a good example of a teacher motivated to self-develop: he had taken the personal initiative to participate in the supervision of students in an external institution because such assessment was not available in the CAS context:

Now I am more into statistics because I feel that this is something that I need for my supervision of any thesis ...I started to offer myself to supervise outside this institution because they don't have theses here. I am giving myself for free to Malaysian Universities to take part in any supervision panel just to keep myself updated

However, many of the participants were demotivated by what they perceived as the limited opportunities for self-development within CAS. One of the participants described this as "...generally speaking maybe it's harder to have PD within [the CAS organization] unless you are really very enthusiastic and you fight for it...."

6.2 Summary

The teachers and managers participating in the present study were well aware of the importance of CPD. The relative importance attached to different aspects of their understanding, however, sometimes varied according to the experience and the heritage of the participants.

While local managers and teachers saw CPD as central to capacity building, ex-pat teachers made no spontaneous reference to this matter, perhaps reflecting their short-term commitment to life in Oman. A related difference between local and expat teachers concerned perceptions of the opportunities available for CPD in the CAS context, with expat teachers tending to bemoan the fact that they had access to fewer opportunities and local teachers feeling that, because of their long term commitment to the country, they should be given priority. While all participants saw CPD as an important support for adaptation to change, this observation was particularly marked in the case of expat teachers experiencing culture shock in their new environment.

There were also differences between more and less experienced teachers, both Omani and expat, with less experienced teachers tending to attach greater importance to the role of CPD in keeping up to date than their more experienced colleagues. This difference was even more marked in focus group discussions of the development of teaching skills, with more experienced colleagues making no spontaneous reference to the role of CPD, presumably because they were secure in their own approaches to teaching. By the same token, the more experienced teachers attached greater importance to maintaining credibility with the younger generation of students in their classes. Finally, the less-experienced teachers tended

to be dissatisfied with opportunities for self-development, something that might have negative impact on their future practice.

Chapter 7 Obstacles to effective CPD

This chapter focuses on the needs and issues that directly and indirectly affect CAS teachers' decisions concerning professional development and serve as obstacles to its effective delivery. These can usefully be divided into three main categories: the organisational; the personal/social; and the infrastructural.

7.1 Organisational issues

Any organizational system plays a crucial role in the overall growth because of its regulations. As previously mentioned, in the background chapter, the Colleges of Applied Sciences have recently undergone the process of national accreditation, one outcome of which was the recommendation that the professional development of teachers should receive attention. As also mentioned, senior management are keen to support staff development. However, it is possible to identify a number of weaknesses related to organisational aspects of CPD provision at CAS, including the need for a clear framework for CPD, the top heavy bureaucracy; the need for job specifications, particularly in relation to the coordinator role; and the importance of improved communications systems.

7.1.1 The need for a CPD framework

The international literature on CPD underlines the importance of a clear framework through which knowledge and skills can be enhanced and teachers' autonomous learning sustained (Kennedy, 2005, 2014). This entails well-planned and organized professional development activities where teachers are encouraged to promote both personal and institutional growth; it also requires a team dedicated to the

delivery of CPD.

The lack of such a framework was identified as a serious obstacle by both local and ex-pat experienced teachers and their less-experienced ex-pat colleagues.

Comments from the experienced ex-pat teachers included:

All these decisions ... should come from an expert in the field not from the perspective of someone who actually takes decisions for us from his subjective point of view. We really do need people who are expert in the field and... a particular body that is actually responsible for this.

We really need a clear programme that would put teachers' focus first of all.

We need at first a clear organism that would actually translate all these different ideas and put them into practice. We need a clear guidelines springing up from a clear body. We need to actually to get in contact with a committee or people in charge of teacher professional development, [something] which is actually totally absent today

These observations were endorsed by their less experienced ex-pat colleagues:

We need a proper framework

We really need a clear programme

You need to create a framework to get these things because if you don't create this framework you don't get it

I feel there are quite good initiatives for PD ... but what is needed is to make it systematic.

Like their ex-pat colleagues, the more experienced Omani teachers identified the importance of establishing a framework for professional development. There was uncertainty, however, about how best to achieve the culture which would result in the creation of this framework. As one teacher commented: ‘Do we need to create the culture ourselves or should it be a part of the institution?’ while another asserted: “I think if it would be better if it is from the Ministry”. A final observation was: “Absolutely, we need an administration with a title “Teacher Professional Development Centre”. The only group that did not mention this issue, was the less experienced Omani teachers, possibly because they had not worked previously in settings where such a framework was in place.

7.1.2 Top heavy bureaucracy

Frustration with the bureaucracy around CPD was another recurring issue. Many of the less-experienced local, the more-experienced ex-pat teachers and the CAS coordinators complained about the complex procedures involved in gaining access to CPD organised outside CAS and the inability of those not centrally involved in teaching to deliver appropriate training. The question of conference attendance was particularly contentious:

They ask for the acceptance like three months before the conference which is difficult to have it before three months [less-experienced Omani teacher]

And then later then they asked me to find someone to teach my classes that I am going to miss. I need to find teachers by myself and also I need to pay all the money [laughing] [less-experienced Omani teacher]

I have proposed a paper in Dhofar University. It was accepted and I sent an email to the organizing team ... to schedule my session on Saturday because I can't take permission on Sunday [working day in Oman][more-experienced ex-pat teacher]

Because this is very complex college ... a lot of different things happening here and it takes a year probably understand what is going on [Coordinator]

A closely related issue raised by the more-experienced ex-pat teachers and the coordinators concerned the highly centralised nature of this bureaucracy and the limited opportunities for grassroots involvement in decision making. For example, one of the more experienced ex-pat teachers described the situation thus:

The centralized system of PD is hurting people. Because people express their needs but when it goes there [to the bureaucracy] they come back with a plan that is not relevant to anybody. So nobody understands how this decision has been taken, how these lists of courses have been selected.

7.1.3 Need for job specifications

According to the Business Dictionary (www.businessdictionary.com/), a job description is:

A broad, general, and written statement of a specific job, based on the findings of a job analysis, it generally includes duties, purposes, responsibilities, scope, and working conditions of a job along with the job's title, and the name or designation of the person to whom the employee reports. Job description usually forms the basis of job specification.

The need for job specifications was identified in particular by the CAS coordinators, who tend to be relatively inexperienced. There are several levels of coordination

within the English departments; module coordinator, assessment coordinator, e-learning coordinator, ELT coordinator and level coordinator. They have a reduced teaching load: no more than ten hours a week in comparison with the 16 contact hours worked by their colleagues. Coordinators are assigned according to their level of experience and qualifications, though, according to one of the HODs, preference is given to locals because they are the ones who remain in the CAS system. One of the coordinators described her experience thus:

I have started teaching only that semester and they chose me to be a coordinator – I don't know how? At the beginning I didn't know really what I am supposed to do? Because there wasn't any job description or I have not received it I am not really sure about that.

In fact, only two of the coordinators who participated – the more recently appointed e-learning coordinators – reported having received guidelines as to what they were required to do:

I am really grateful for that a job description was circulated I think in November ... [it was] very brief, that's bullet points of responsibilities

This is the first semester in three years where I actually have the correct number of hours as specified by the job description instead of the teaching load

Most, however, were clearly frustrated at the lack of guidance:

It would be better if they create guidelines for a job description so that we know what the limit is that we can do for others to support them to help them

This lack of job description, actually what teachers supposed to do, what coordinators supposed to do, what HOD and so on and so forth ... So we need clear job description. Based on that we can establish good training with the staff.

To have a coordinating experience especially as some of us relatively new to work in higher education in Oman ... we need a clear job description and having the time and the space to be able to follow responsibilities appropriately.

7.1.4 Time

I refer here to the tension between, on the one hand time that needs to be spent in professional development and the other responsibilities of teachers on the other. This was identified as an obstacle by both teachers and management. Among the issues highlighted by the Less-experienced local and expat teachers were the lack of time to read or undertake research:

The obstacle is the time, you don't have the time because you have a lot of other work. So eventually, that will have an effect on you and on the students [less-experienced ex-pat]

But the time is a big concern – we have really no time ... hard to find some time to read [less-experienced local]

I think there is not any scope for us to do research because of the [work] load we have ... I think it is difficult having 16 or 18 hours [teaching] plus the admin [less-experienced local]

More-experienced local teachers and coordinators expressed similar concerns:

Also sometimes we don't have time people don't have time they are busy doing other work [More-experienced local teacher]

According to our timetable ... some of us have eight to ten hours but other duties are assigned for us to the extent that ... we don't look at the PD or we don't think about different ways of PD, for example writing research, participating in conferences [Coordinator]

In my case for example, since I became a coordinator for year one I am having less and less time to actually read in order to develop. I try to do my best to be honest but ... I am not reading as much as I used to. [Coordinator]

A month ago, we received like a draft about going to conferences and they included in that draft that you cannot attend any conference during the teaching period. You cannot attend even conferences within the holiday leave, so from June until September. The question was: OK when can I attend? [Experienced local teacher]

A time-related concern reported by a more-experienced ex-pat teachers, however, related to yet another aspect of CPD

I don't have special time to mentor my new colleague so because it is something additional to me the easiest thing to me is just go and give him the lectures just to make sure that he does exactly like you a copy of you for the safety of the final examinations and to me I because I don't have time for that

Management was only too well aware of these concerns. One HoD highlighted financial issues: "PD is restricted within this time and budget constraints". Another commented:

You have this time constraints ... let us say that there is a conference or a symposium, whatever. You cannot send twelve or too many teachers during study weeks otherwise the college is going to be empty... The time between is very limited when you deal with marks or teachers have no annual leave. So again this is a very critical issue when to send teachers on PD.

7.1.5 Good communication systems

An issue of good communication received particular attention from managers.

Typical coordinators' comments, for instance, included:

Within the department, I have a communication problems Within the college I have a communication problem. Within the Ministry ... For instance, if I ask teachers to do something, out of forty only four maybe or five will do it.

I think again it's at the communication level. I think it's a big challenge for us.

When they change it from education into applied sciences a lot of teachers they just don't fit into the system ... if something dramatically changes or happens in the next few years they are not really prepared. Maybe I am very qualified teacher today [but] I might be not qualified if the system changes. I really need to be updated. What happens? Nobody knows about it. There are no reports, nothing.

One of the senior managers spoke with passion on this issue:

We have initiative from the academic IT department: they have subscribed into a BESCO which is a database for journals. I haven't seen the journals which are related to English and I don't have the password. Maybe I should go and ask them for it but a colleague of mine from another specialization said that, although it's a good thing that they have a subscription in a database, this database is useless for them. I cannot say this about English because I haven't seen it but this just tells you something about the miscommunication between the people who are teaching in the colleges who need these things and the people here who are making these decisions. I don't know who they consulted, what recommendations they got in order to subscribe to this database instead of another one: based on what? Or whose decision to start with? But people in the field saying that OK, it's good but this is not what we wanted. So again lack of communication ...

miscommunication. Who decides based on what? And how are the peoples' opinion represented in this decisions? And I think this is going to be very huge issue in CAS because as you know we are a system; we should be running a standardized kind of system procedures, operations. But we have six different colleges so you can count on having six different interpretations of the same thing.

7.1.6 Available funding

Funding CPD provisions' importance is seen as a fundamental aspect in developing schools in general and teachers in particular. As mentioned earlier in the background chapter, the colleges of applied sciences are provided with a certain amount of budget for professional development annually. This budget is specified for every member of teaching staff as stated by one of the CAS officials (Rustaq Dean):

نعم هو فيما يتعلق بالإنماء المهني هناك مخصصات لموضوع التدريب بشكل عام وفي بعض الحالات هذه البنود قد لا تكون كافية إذا ما أراد الإنسان أن يتوسع في مسألة التدريب وأن تكون شاملة لجميع أعضاء هيئة التدريس عمانيين وغير عمانيين لذلك أنا أعتقد انه في بعض الأحيان يحدث أن نستعين ببنود أخرى رغم وجود مخصصات محددة لموضوع التدريب لكن تحتاج إلى تعزيز حتى تستطيع ان تعرف جانب الانماء المهني والتدريب وتشجيع أعضاء هيئة التدريس على البحث العلمي وحضور المؤتمرات والندوات والمشاركة بالإضافة إلى إيجاد توازن بين الأعمال داخل المؤسسة وهذا الأمر موجود

[Concerning PD, there is a special budget for training [PD] in general, though in some cases such budget is not sufficient for training all of the teaching staff members both local and ex-pat. I think beside such insufficient budget we need to back it up with other funding compromising other elements for the sake of professional development.]

One of the HODs as managers also acknowledged that the CAS deans are authorized to spend some funding for promoting teachers professionally:

The dean is authorized because it is there about degree how to send people for PD conference that they have to established process more than two months ahead of time and this should some of connected to Oman as a

country and as well as the system if it is if the dean is convinced that this is going to bring some kind of return to the college

Some of the CAS teachers shared the same perception as their dean and acknowledged that there is a provided budget for professional development. Some of the observations are:

There is a budget for teachers to go and participate in the ... [less-experienced local teacher]

This project owns a millions projects in human resources by the Omani government [More-experienced ex-pat teacher]

This programme we have been talking about the Cambridge thing costs the government hundred millions to train people so there is some money [More-experienced ex-pat teacher]

It's become so much better than before ... it's so much better that's why I came back not only the logging ... PD ... they are raising money for conferences and as in things like this so it is getting better [More-experienced ex-pat teacher]

if you do the paper work ahead of time ahead of time and you get organized in advance you can leave and go takes some days and go to conferences and if you are presenting then there is funding available but you have to be very well organized for that you have to have everything in line a good two months I think before you fly [More experienced ex-pat teacher]

Although funding was perceived by some of the participants as an important incentive for professional development, others saw it as one major obstacle for the process in the CAS context. For example, many participants viewed the financial aspect as one of the biggest constraints for professional development in the CAS context. Typical observations:

I think what he is saying that or maybe one of the reasons why nothing happens [regarding PD] is what you required to do your job properly is money ... finance OK [Coordinator]

I heard financially we are sponsored or provided with five hundred [Omani Rial] [900 pounds] each annually but where is the money? [Coordinator]

I need money seriously [Coordinator]

Financial I think because probably the college or the ministry sometimes they cannot afford sending people [More-experienced local]

it is very important and ... like she said D stagnation is like the horrible feeling that the person feels in a career so all seek to change to developing to progress ... and sometimes when this the official ... well is absent we try to seek development for ourselves but it turns it costs a lot of money [Experienced expat teacher]

We want more money [Experienced ex-pat teacher]

Yes money for example this assessment training is we need to pay 15 Omani Rial I was expecting this to be free to be honest (laughing) [Experienced expat teacher]

7.1.7 Summer holiday and on duty timing

An interesting opportunity was mentioned by some of the CAS teachers who suggested summer holiday to be used for professional development. As discussed in the background chapter that teachers are given a chance to take a long holiday for about two intensive months or a short holiday for about three weeks. Summer school classes are taught by mostly local teachers who usually take short-term holidays. However, there is a period of time before the summer holiday when teachers have finished marking and can utilize this time for professional development.

The less-experienced local teachers when they were asked about the available opportunities for CPD, some of them mentioned that they can even use their annual holiday. One of them commented:

Also they are afraid of like of the time of teaching there is summer like in summer we don't have classes why don't they provide us with workshops

during that time? It's just one ... even although we have holidays or leave it's OK we will come ... just bring it to us

Another teacher from the same group suggested to use the duty time when there is no teaching:

And why it should be after four o'clock why is it not in a work range why we are supposed to be here from eight to four why isn't there something arranged like in between this

Summer holiday was seen by the local less-experienced teachers as a source for professional development that can be utilized as a final need for professional development.

7.2 Personal/social needs

Participants in the study highlighted a number of issues which caused them considerable frustration on a personal level making them feel undervalued and demotivated. These issues included concern about the lack of responsiveness to perceived needs; lack of appreciation or acknowledgement of their efforts; the differential treatment of Omani and ex-pat staff; and the lack of involvement in decision making.

7.2.1 Lack of responsiveness to perceived needs

Many members of staff at CAS expressed frustration that their voices were not being heard. They considered that the management was not paying appropriate attention to their CPD needs;

As we saw in chapter three, needs analysis is widely considered an essential first step in designing appropriate professional development activities (O'Sullivan, 2004). This process needs to be undertaken regularly, partly in order to respond to

changes and partly to reassure participants that their needs are being addressed (Kabilan & Veratharaju, 2013). Teachers' needs, of course, differ from one context to another and from one teacher to the next. Several factors determine teachers' needs including context (encompassing culture, learners and curriculum), lack of knowledge (both subject and pedagogical) and lack of experience. Once the needs are identified, the appropriate activities for CPD can be provided.

In the CAS context, there was a clear acknowledgment of the importance of addressing staff needs for CPD. An administrator in the human resources department described the process of providing opportunities for the professional development of both academic and administrative staff in the following terms:

هذه الاستمارة يتم توزيعها لكل سنة لكل موظف سواء كان أكاديمي أو إداري، في حالة أنه أكاديمي أو إداري هذه الاستمارة نعطيها لمدة ثلاث سنوات قادمة. مثلا نعطيها على 2011 بحيث تستمر الى 2013 كخطة يقوم بدراستها وإحصائها

[A form covering a three year period is distributed to all staff, for example, from 2011 to 2013; it is given in advance to cover a three year period]

Interestingly, the teachers did not mention this form in any of the focus group discussions. However, they did refer to a list of suggested training courses in Arabic (see appendix A). One of the CAS HoDs described this as an attempt at needs' analysis, while recognising that the teachers' needs had not yet been addressed: "There is a checklist and we have to select certain things but unfortunately not much has happened yet". The general consensus among the teachers was that their professional development needs had not been properly thought through:

I said from the start [if] we're to have effective PD, we need to conduct needs' analysis to find out what we need actually [More-experienced Omani teacher]

Unfortunately, I mean, nothing happened. It was just like a form to be filled and to be documented somewhere but unfortunately we don't receive any training nothing at all [More-experienced Omani teacher]

For the Omanis the administration every semester or every beginning of the year, they send them a kind of template ... and they tell them frankly ... it is not you who decides where to go. After all, it is us who will decide [Less-experienced Omani teacher]

At the beginning of this year or at the end of last semester ... the HOD came with a list and he asked us to write courses that we need. And we wrote I think about two or three training needs. But unfortunately nobody came back to us and even the year before they asked us to put ticks next to the courses that we would like to have but unfortunately until this moment we have received nothing. [More-experienced ex-pat teacher]

These staff comments suggest that they considered that insufficient importance was being attached to their actual CPD needs, an issue with clear implications for their motivation to perform to the best of their ability.

7.2.2 Appreciation

Appreciation and acknowledgement on the part of employers of the work undertaken by both teachers and middle management are similarly important in motivating employees to perform at a high level. Significantly, a lack of appreciation was reported by both the more-experienced teachers (local and ex-pat) and the coordinators. Typical comments included:

I mean I have been doing things nobody asked me to do ... nobody said thank you so I stopped doing the extra thing and I am just doing the minimum of coordination [Coordinator]

Sometime a word of appreciation is enough [More-experienced local teacher]

They are not appreciated that's why they forget about it [More-experienced local teacher]

You feel that there is no really much appreciation ... unless you feel there's appreciation from appropriate people ... people don't care to do things [More-experienced ex-pat teacher]

Not even in the appraisal I mean it [appreciation] should be taken in the appraisal right? [More-experienced ex-pat teacher]

7.2.3 Differential treatment

Parity is another factor that affects intrinsic motivation. In the CAS context, both more and less-experienced ex-pat teachers reported that they were not treated in the same way as their local colleagues pursuant to the Royal Decree awarding Omani citizens higher rates of pay (see chapter two). The programme director was very aware of these concerns but was powerless to address the expat teachers' calls for equal pay:

Many teachers expat in all of the colleges raise this concern: why Omanis have their salary raised and not us? We are doing the same job ... sometimes we are more experienced than them, so what's this? ... This is not you, this is not even the DG, this is national wide decision that was taken high up and it

was implemented. So ... I cannot do anything ... despite my even I agree with them [ex-pat teachers], I cannot do anything about it.

This was nonetheless an issue to considerable concern to the large proportion of expat teachers who raised it:

Why is PD in Oman for the Omanis and expats left out of the equation?

We don't have any opportunities, basically none! Unless we develop ourselves nothing happens. You know, all the opportunities go to the Omanis.

I have been here for more than five years and I went to my first workshop this week that's the first workshop I have ever been allowed to go to in five years

We are not included in PD at all. Usually it's the Ministry and Omani teachers only

7.2.4 A voice in decision-making

Both middle level managers, including programme directors and coordinators, and teachers felt the need to have a greater voice in decision-making process at CAS.

A number of participants expressed frustration about the one-way communication taking place in staff meetings where, for the most part, HODs distributed duties and discussed updates while teachers listened and took notes. The lack of opportunity to contribute to decision making inevitably had a depressing effect on employees' sense of belonging and motivation to perform to the best of their abilities. The less-experienced ex-pat teachers, for instance, identified the need for a feedback mechanism as a means of being heard and contributing to their own, their

colleagues' and even institutional development. As discussed in chapter six, feedback was currently handled on an ad hoc basis whereby coordinators were supposed to pass on teachers' feedback to the HODs for consideration by the programme director in meetings with the Ministry. From the teachers' perspective, however, there was, no evidence of such feedback having influenced CAS decision-making.

I don't think there has been that sort of a staff meeting where you know it's discussion like this [focus group discussion] and for PD to take place you need some sort of feedback from the teachers themselves. [Less-experienced ex-pat teacher]

The more experienced local teachers also commented on their desire to be involved in CAS decision-making. In particular, as experienced teachers they felt they had a contribution to make at the overall strategic level:

At the top of my needs [is] to be involved in decision-making. And I think that's a key point here mainly because whatever that we are having now comes from top down we have no hands on.

This position is consistent with the importance attached to the notion of participation in stress theory and theory concerning work conditions (Kwakman, 2003; Söderfeldt et al., 1996) in relation to the influence a teacher has over the working environment and opportunities to take part in decision-making (Firestone & Pennell, 1993).

The desire to be more involved in decision-making at CAS was, however, by no means limited to teachers. The programme director responsible for the academic organization in the English department expressed dissatisfaction thus:

The committee finalized the final thing [the CAS strategic plan]... When I came here it was in the final stages and there was no real consultation about it ... it wasn't given to me for review or whatever.

7.3 Infrastructure

Infrastructure, such as buildings and internet facilities are important for the effective delivery of effective teaching and also CPD. Buildings such as meeting rooms, social rooms where teachers can discuss their teaching issues, offices where they can find privacy to work and mentor both their learners and teachers and internet facility through which they can download and surf the net easily and communicate electronically both within the institution and beyond were some of CAS teachers' concerns. Another concern affected teachers was parking: the prioritisation of parking for students over employees, for instance, affects punctuality.

Dissatisfaction was expressed in relation to a wide range of infrastructural issues, including the physical environment:

So I need like an office for myself [Experienced local teacher]

We need to have offices [Experienced ex-pat teacher]

Even meetings we cannot conduct meetings and we are trying to find classrooms to conduct [Coordinator]

My car is parked under the sun [Less-experienced local teacher]

The uneven distribution of teaching resources was also mentioned:

There was an email that was sent I think two days back about their renewal of the 'EPSCO' membership that they renew every year and they pay a big amount of money. And it's useless [for us] basically! They do have subscriptions to some journals that teachers can use but not in all themes [Coordinator]

The main concerns, however, focused on IT. There was a strong feeling among staff that the English department was the 'poor relative' in relation to the allocation of IT resources:

Also especially I am talking about English department we don't want to be discriminated against the reason I am saying this is not just everybody knows personally when I came here and I wanted you know like laptop they said no you are not taking the new ones it's just for the engineering department or IT [More-experienced ex-pat teacher]

But this called opportunity things like everybody is equal whatever you teach or every teacher staff you need your own whatever device [More-experienced ex-pat teacher]

We need computers like new ones why IT gets new computers and we don't [Coordinator]

We need software [Coordinator]

7.4 Summary

Various obstacles to teachers' professional development in the CAS context were identified.

On the level of organisation, most of the teachers and managers pointed to the need for a CPD framework which recognised the importance of needs analysis, adequate funding and time for CPD activities, good communication and the need to avoid top heavy bureaucracy. On the level of the personal and social, the more-experienced local and ex-pat teachers and coordinators pointed to the need to be appreciated and have a voice in the decision-making process. Ex-pat teachers, both more and less-experienced, were totally dissatisfied with the differential treatment that they received compared to their local colleagues.

Infrastructure in the form of physical environment such as offices, parking and facilities, resources and IT was perceived as another important factor and need that boosted teachers' development process.

Finally, it is worth noting that both the social constructivist and adult learning theories which underpin this study predict that the heavily transmissive nature of most CPD activities currently available would be significant obstacles to teacher motivation to take part in CPD and participants' comments indeed confirm that this is the case.

Chapter 8 Conclusion

8.1 Introduction

In this final chapter I set out a summary of the main findings in response to the research questions set out in chapter four. I then describe both the contribution to knowledge made by this study and also its limitations. I look next at the implications to the findings for decision makers in the Sultanate of Oman government, in general, and in higher education, in particular. This is followed by some suggestions for future research. Finally, I reflect on my research journey focusing on my learning experiences.

8.2 Summary of the main findings

The main research question guiding this study is: What are the main issues in the promotion of professional development in CAS? This question can be broken down further into the following sub-questions:

What is the existing provision for CPD at CAS?

What are participants' understandings of and aspirations for CPD?

What are the obstacles to the implementation of effective CPD?

I will now summarize the findings from this study which answer these questions.

8.2.1 What is the existing provision for CPD at CAS?

In this section, I will summarise the findings related to existing CPD opportunities, together with staff viewpoints about these opportunities.

8.2.1.1 Range of Opportunities

As observed in reports produced by external and internal organizations before the present study was undertaken (see chapter two), CPD at the time of fieldwork was practiced at CAS in a very ad hoc manner. One-off sessions such as conferences and workshops were found to be the most widespread form of provision. Other CPD activities including induction, training, professional learning communities, mentoring, reflection and online learning, were also evident but to a very limited degree. The participants including officials, senior and middle managers and teachers acknowledged the importance of the process of professional development and showed a high level of interest and support for the process. Several opportunities for CPD however were not well-utilized as will be discussed in greater detail below.

8.2.1.2 Staff views on current CPD provision

The importance of Induction in professional development was acknowledged by all of the study participants. As already mentioned, however, it was offered in a very ad hoc manner with a focus on new teachers who did not have teaching qualifications. Other teachers reported feeling lost when they started to work in the colleges or when they assumed a new role, such as coordinator. An induction programme

introduced in one of the colleges after I had completed my fieldwork focused mainly on Omani culture and CAS regulations and, like many other settings (Indoshi, 2003) failed to address a wider range of challenges and issues that could usefully be addressed as part of the induction process. In addition, this newly implemented CAS induction, lasted for approximately two weeks which was too short, for example, to tackle any teaching issues participants were likely to encounter (Bubb & Earley, 2006).

There was little evidence of more experienced teachers supporting junior colleagues as part of a professional learning community. This may be attributed to a lack of awareness of the potential of this approach and to the prevailing culture among CAS teachers.

In a similar vein, although there were examples of new teachers being mentored by their more experienced peers, this was the exception rather than the rule, despite the general awareness among CAS participants of the importance of mentoring and despite the availability of experienced teachers.

Teachers and managers both acknowledged the importance of reflection in the process of individual and institutional development. There was, however, little evidence that reflection was systematically practiced among CAS teachers, partly, it would seem, because of the lack of knowledge among less-experienced local teachers and partly because of the lack of interest among the more-experienced teachers, both local and ex-pats.

By the same token, although online learning was perceived as an effective independent learning technique and opportunity for teacher development, few

participants in the study took advantage of such opportunities. In this case, poor internet connections were seen as a major obstacle, as discussed in chapter seven.

8.2.2 What are participants' understandings of and aspirations for CPD?

There were six main purposes for professional development according to the participants' understanding to the term. These were capacity building, keeping teachers up to date, the development of teaching skills, adaptation to change, the notion of professional development as a process and professional development as a self-development.

Both management and local teachers, more and less-experienced, were well aware of the importance of professional development in building up the overall capacity of institutions and saw CPD as central to capacity building. The ex-pat teachers however, did not have the same perceptions, partly because they were more oriented towards personal goals and partly because they were committed only to a short stay in Oman (see chapter six).

All of the CAS participants conceptualized professional development in terms of updating knowledge – both subject and pedagogical – as another important objective for CPD. The more-experienced teachers perceived IT knowledge as of particular importance in keeping them updated professionally while their less-experienced local colleagues' were concerned more with pedagogical knowledge.

A focus on curriculum, the context, students' psychology and teaching approaches was considered another objective for professional development in the CAS context. The development of teaching skills through CPD was acknowledged by all participants as influencing learners' learning outcomes. However, the less-

experienced teachers, in particular, expressed an urgent need for guidance in teaching.

Most of the participants conceptualized professional development in terms of adaptation to change. For the less-experienced teachers the focus was on supporting learners more efficiently; the more-experienced teachers were more concerned with issues such as the curriculum, students, regulations, methods of teaching and the direction of education.

The notion of professional development as an on-going process provoked particular comment from managers, some of whom encouraged equality in this matter while others indicated that priority should be given to local teachers since they are the ones committed to a long term future in Oman. This issue also attracted comment from ex-pat teachers who expressed their frustration at the more limited opportunities for professional growth. The less-experienced teachers did not contribute to this debate, presumably because of their lack of experience.

Self-development was the final issue raised in interviews and focus group discussions of teacher aspirations for CPD. Here, as indicated in the literature (see chapter three), motivation is viewed as an, important factor and because CAS teachers tended to be demotivated by the general lack of opportunities for CPD, this inevitably affected their willingness to undertake self-development.

8.2.3 What are the obstacles to the implementation of effective CPD?

Three main obstacles to the effective implementation of CPD at CAS emerged: the lack of an effective framework for CPD; organizational issues; social and personal issues and infrastructural issues.

8.2.3.1 Organizational issues

Organizational factors were seen as having a negative impact on teacher motivation towards professional development. Creating an effective framework for CPD was seen as the most important organizational needs by all of the more experienced teachers at CAS.

The need for clear job specifications for CAS coordinators also emerged as an important finding of the research. Coordinators complained that they were overburdened with work. However, by specifying the tasks and responsibilities it would allow them to know what they were asked to do and accordingly to manage their time and effort.

Time, another aspect of organizational needs, was seen as an obstacle to professional development. Not only for coordinators but for all teaching staff. The appropriate allocation of time therefore emerged as an important element on the creation of a framework for CPD.

Poor communication was identified as a further obstacle to professional development, in particular by the CAS management. Coordinators and HoDs expressed their desperate attitudes whenever they wanted to address their issues to their superiors in the Ministry. They acknowledged that this need would help them escalate the professional development process in the CAS context.

Funding was yet another obstacle, both to cover formal CPD activities such as attending conferences and symposiums and to pay for cover while they were away from their posts.

Finally, teachers assigned to teach in summer schools expressed frustration that they could not use the two month summer holiday for professional development.

8.2.3.2 Personal/Social factors

The second major category of obstacles concerns personal/social factors. The fact that CAS teachers felt their professional development needs were not addressed and that the opportunities on offer were often not relevant to their needs, was considered to be extremely demotivating.

Experienced teachers, both local and ex-pat, as well as coordinators, expressed the feeling that their efforts were not appreciated. They considered appreciation as one of the top issues that their superiors needed to consider which would have a positive impact on their motivation

As already mentioned, the ex-pat teachers felt that they were discriminated against in favour of their local colleagues both in terms of opportunities for CPD and remuneration in general (as discussed in chapter two), again with important implications for their motivation.

The final obstacle related to personal/social factors reported, in particular, by many expat teachers and the more-experienced local teachers was the one way communication that characterised meetings within the department, especially in relation to the issuing of instructions and duties to teachers. Many teachers reported that they considered their insights were of value to the CAS organization and felt that their contribution was being ignored.

8.2.3.3 Infrastructural factors

The final obstacles to implementation involved the CAS infrastructure, including the physical environment, resources and IT facilities. Most of the teachers were not satisfied with the physical environment in the colleges. Some reported that they had no privacy sharing their offices with two or three of their colleagues. Others expressed their dissatisfaction regarding the lack of spaces where they can socialize and discuss their teaching issues in an informal setting. Still others thought that, if they were allocated parking spaces for their cars, this would help them to maintain punctuality.

Many teachers complained that they lacked resources, especially academic books or electronic resources such as online journal in order to be able to maintain their ongoing professional development. Others expressed their needs for upgraded IT facilities compared with their colleagues in other academic departments.

8.3 Contribution of the present study

The current study makes a number of contributions to new knowledge. It offers insight not only into issues which affect all teachers, but also discusses important differences between the perspectives of managers, more and less experienced teachers and local and expatriate teachers concerning beliefs around teaching, curriculum and infrastructure and the ways that these impact on motivation and opportunities to take part in professional development. The investigation of these issues in an Omani context represents an important contribution to international research on teacher CPD, particularly in a tertiary context.

By the same token, given the dearth of related research in the Gulf states, this study contributes to our understanding of the development of teachers not only in the Omani context where the only previous research focused on just one approach to CPD in the pre-tertiary sector (Al-Lamki, 2009) but to professional development in higher education in the Gulf in general.

Finally, the study makes a contribution to theory, in the application of the three lens approach of Fraser et al (2007) which incorporates the (personal, social or occupational) influence on learning elaborated by Bell and Gillbert; the forms of learning (formal-informal and planned-incident) proposed by Reid; and the methods and stages of learning (transmissive, transitional and transformative) discussed by Kennedy.

8.4 Limitations to the present study

It is important nonetheless less to acknowledge the limitations of this study. As discussed in chapter four (4.4.3), a case study approach helps researchers to explore a given setting in depth and can generate rich and comprehensive data. However, the inappropriateness of generalizing the findings is considered one of its main drawbacks. The sample for this study was limited to two of the six colleges that make up the CAS organization supervised by the Ministry of Higher Education in Oman. It cannot be assumed that the findings will necessarily apply either to the other colleges (though all having the same curriculum, regulations, textbooks and assessment procedures and students come from the same backgrounds) or to other academic institutions in the Sultanate of Oman. This is mainly because, as discussed earlier, context plays an essential role in professional development where many different variables come into play. The study therefore, did not aim to generalize its

finding to other contexts. That said, it is hoped that the data collection techniques have been described in sufficient detail for researchers in other settings to be able to replicate this study and explore the extent to which the findings may also apply to them.

Another limitation is that the study focused on the CAS English departments. It is possible that teachers in other departments might have perceptions of professional development different from those of the English teachers.

The data were gathered using three main methods; focus group discussions, interviews and documentary analysis, all of which have some limitations, as discussed in the chapter four (4.5.2.1., 4.5.2.2. and 4.5.4), However, I have attempted to increase the trustworthiness of my interpretation by triangulating both data collection methods and data sources; theoretical triangulation – the use of the three lens approach – has also been an important aspect of my analysis.

Another limitation of the study was that the data were gathered at one point in time; a longitudinal study may have offered a richer and more accurate picture of the issues surrounding CPD practice in CAS context.

Finally, I should point to the ambiguities surrounding my role as an insider researcher. Because of my previous position as a manager at CAS, teachers may have found it difficult to be honest in their responses in order to please me and to give a favourable picture about the practice of CPD. However, in order to encourage them to be as frank as possible, all of the participants were assured that I was there in my capacity as a researcher and I no longer held managerial post. I was also able to relate to participants informally during fieldwork, thus building trust. I recognise, however, that my close knowledge of the setting might potentially bias my

interpretation of what I observed and was told, something which I tried to avoid by continual reflection on my part in the process.

While recognising these limitations, as I have indicated, I have taken steps wherever possible to minimize any bias in my analysis and increase the trustworthiness of my findings.

8.5 Recommendations

Since this research is a critical ethnographic study, one of its main aims has been to improve professional development in Omani higher education in general and CPD practice in the CAS context in particular. As such, the findings suggest a number of recommendations which can usefully be brought to the attention of the Omani government in general and the decision makers in Omani higher education and CAS in particular.

- In order to meet the CPD needs at CAS, it is crucial to create a CPD framework which is subject to on-going review to ensure that it responds to change.
- It is necessary to conduct continuing needs analysis linked to the CPD framework in which the first stage will be mostly predicated on the teachers' needs.
- Newly graduated teachers should be mentored by more experienced colleagues for at least a period of one academic year. The mentoring process should be supported through modified teaching loads for both the mentors and mentees and these efforts should be recognised through accreditation linked to both of their profiles.

- Both new appointments to the CAS teaching staff and new internal appointments need a sound induction process in order for them to perform their new roles more efficiently. Induction programmes should not only focus on CAS regulations but also on teaching and learning issues.
- Teachers should be provided with both formal and informal opportunities for CPD
- While reflection, professional learning communities, online learning and action research are encouraged by CAS management, teachers showed little awareness of their usefulness, reporting that such activities are not embedded in current practice and that there was no appropriate support. Priority should therefore be given for training on these issues.

Administrative issues

- Full job specifications for teachers and coordinators are required to give a clear guidance on tasks and responsibilities.
- Responsibility for the professional development process needs to be devolved to the college level, to ensure it is more responsive to staff needs.

Motivational issues

- It is vital to create a supportive ethos which acknowledges and appreciates teacher and manager effort. Appraisal reports are a useful tool to this end and can be used for instance, in support of promotion and/or applications for further study.
- It is also fundamental for CAS managers to consult the stake holders in the decision making process.

Infrastructural issues

- Teachers need a place where they can socialize and discuss professional issues in an informal setting. It is important to equip CAS teachers with such venues.
- Teachers need to mentor each other and their learners and therefore need some privacy. It is therefore desirable for teachers to have their own offices.
- It is essential to provide CAS teachers access to online resources such as journals and e-books. This will require an upgrading of current provision to include a high speed internet connection.

These recommendations will be communicated to stakeholders using several approaches. I will make a short presentation and send an executive summary of the study to H.E. the Minister of Higher Education and her Undersecretary. I will reach the Deans, HoDs and Coordinators through seminars, conferences and workshops that are annually conducted in the CAS organization. Other public and private local and national institutions will be reached through presentations at both local and national symposia and events. Finally, I will present papers at both regional conferences targeted at GCC countries and also at international conferences.

8.6 Suggestions for future research

The present study points to a number of possibilities for future research. Similar studies can be carried out in different colleges and/or higher education institutions covering more academic departments in order to achieve more comprehensive picture of issues related both to professional development and teaching and learning. Since teachers' development is an on-going process, and the present study represents a snapshot of what was happening at the time of fieldwork, a longitudinal

study could usefully be carried out in order to gain more insight into CPD in Omani higher education.

Teachers' motivation, both intrinsic and extrinsic, plays a crucial role in the professional development process, as elaborated in chapter three. It would be interesting therefore, to undertake a study on how teachers can be motivated to promote individual and institutional development.

Since the overall purpose of CPD is to develop the learning capacity of students, a study of the impact of CPD on classroom practice represents another potential area of research in the Omani context. A follow up study, based on the implementation of the proposed CPD framework (see figure 8.1) would also be of considerable interest .

8.7 My learning journey

Each stage of the last three years of this PhD study – deciding and reframing my research agenda, designing and developing the study, gaining the ethical approval, collecting data, analysing my data and writing up – has had its joy, happiness, challenges, stress and frustration. In the first stage, for example, when I came with an idea for my research, my supervisor conducted general meetings with her students where each of us started to talk about our research agenda. By listening to my colleagues and with my supervisor's overall support, I started to reformulate my research topic. This process was repeated over several meetings tackling general issues at the beginning of the research journey. When our supervisor felt that we had started to learn from this process, she called each of us for individual meeting(s). This was supported, in addition, by forming a study group involving colleagues with the same supervisor. This study group helped me a lot to discuss my research and

critically reflecting on that of others. Of course challenges and frustration started when I started as I planned my study design.

The other stages of my research become more challenging, more complicated in some respects and smoother in others. Challenges included recognising that I needed to learn to read more critically, to reflect on my readings, to critique others' writings, to discuss my research topic, to solve problems and to write more critically. These skills were not easy to gain. Frustration was experienced when I submitted work to my supervisor who, in addition to offering encouragement, also indicated that more criticality was required in my writing. In spite of feeling frustration, after going through my work again and again, I was able to identify my weaknesses. Accordingly, I was able to systematically tackle such weaknesses by reading more books and journals and by focusing on improving my writing. This process became smoother over time, with the support from my supervisor, colleagues, self-study and reflection and the Reading Researcher Development Programme (RRDP).

My learning trajectory, in fact, has much in common with the issues discussed in this thesis related to CPD. Opportunities such as supervisors' support, RDP courses, library, online sources, workshops and seminars, study groups, research groups, conferences and colleagues are available for PhD students. I was able to take advantages of all these CPD opportunities, inwardly because of my motivation to develop myself as a researcher and develop CPD practice in Omani higher education and externally by gaining the PhD degree. The autonomous learning associated with the third (transformative) stage of Kennedy (2005) framework has been integral to my PhD study. In addition, our needs analysis, as beginning researchers, was regularly assessed and accordingly we were assigned to different RDP courses. Such

needs analyses helped me as a beginning researcher to reflect on my development needs and to address these with my supervisor in different meetings.

This study has sharpened several skills including critical thinking, critical reading and writing, solving problems, conducting both short and long-term research, my social science research skills, critiquing other academic works and presenting to international audiences. In my social life, because of the metropolitan setting for my study, my interpersonal skills and my English language have improved, as well as my time management and my self-confidence. This study has really changed both my academic and professional life.

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Appendices

Appendix A : A list of training sessions and workshops

البرامج التدريبية المقترحة

مسمى البرنامج	
التخطيط الإداري	
إدارة الأزمات	
إدارة التغيير	
مداينة العقود وإدارتها إلكترونياً	
تقنيات فعالية الحكومية	
الإجراءات المثالية في المؤسسة	
مهارات المنطق	
مهارات إعداد التقارير المالية	
نظم إدارة الخزان الحكومية	
العمل في إدارة المشتريات	
إدارة الموارد البشرية إلكترونياً	
لمسؤول الناحية في إدارة الموارد البشرية	
نظم التوزيع الكهربائي وسمايتها	
إدارة وصيانة المعنى	
الأبعاد المتعددة للقيادة وإدارة الجودة الشاملة	
تتبع المعيار الإدارية	
تنمية المهارات الإدارية للمرأة العاملة	
إدارة الخدمات إلكترونياً	
التصميم التعليمي لبرمجيات التعليم	
لغة البرمجة فيجول	
تحرير وتحويل الصور (فوتوشوب)	
الفلش (CS3)	
CCNA1	
CCNA2	
MCTIP server	
MCTIP Enterpri Admis	
Adobe After CS4	
SPSS	
أساليب شبكات الحاسوب	
شبكات الإنترنت وخدمات الترجمة	
النظم الآلية في المكاتب	
تصنيف الكتب والتدريس	
تنمية مهارات التخطيط للعمل	
إعداد التقارير والبحوث Latex	
إعداد وصياغة التقارير والمعاملات	
إعداد النسخة الإلكترونية	
إدارة المختبر إلكترونياً	
التعبير والإبداع	
صناعة القاد وبناء الشخصية	
إعداد وتقديم المشاريع	
أساليب قياس معدلات الأداء	
أساليب البحث العلمي	
المكتباتية لتطبيق المتقدمة إلكترونياً	
مهارات الاتصال الفعال	
تنمية مهارات حل المشكلات واتخاذ القرار	
تنمية مهارات العرض والتقديم	
المهارات العامة في العلاقات العامة	
تطوير نظم العمل وتنظيم الإجراءات	
التفكير الحديث في الإدارة والتنظيم الريفي	
فن القيادة ومواجهة أعطال المركبات	
فن تقديم الخدمة	
إدارة المنظمات الإدارية	
الطيرة والأرشفة الإلكترونية	
مهارات الترجمة الوظيفي وتقديم الاستشارة الوظيفية	
الإدارة بالأهداف وتحويل الأفكار إلى خطط عمل مثالية	
إعداد تصويبات والتقود المحاسبية	
برمجة وصيانة الحاسب الآلي	
الترخيص الدولية لقيادة الحاسب الآلي A+	
JAVA - HTML - ASP	
CCNP	
DBA الأوراكل	
planing and menging windows server8	
Linux/ Unix	
التفكير الحديث في إدارة الأنشطة والفعاليات	
الإخراج المعرفي	
تحليل السمات والأجراءات لموظفي القول والتسجيل	
مهارات التعامل مع سلوكيات الطلاب الجامعي	
الطرق المتكيفة في تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية للمعلمين	
إدارة الوقت ومراجعة ضوابط العمل	
تصميم وتطوير المواقع الإلكترونية	

رابعاً : ما هي أهم المعوقات التي تواجهك في أداء عملك؟		
٤		١
٥		٢
٦		٣

خامساً : البرامج التدريبية التي ترى أنك بحاجة للإلتحاق بها وترتبط مباشرة بمهام عملك				
رأي وتعليقات الرئيس المباشر		الدورات المطلوبة		٢
ملاحظات	لاستحق	يستحق	اسم الدورة	
				١
				٢
				٣
				٤
				٥

سادساً : البرامج التدريبية التي ترى أنك بحاجة للإلتحاق بها وتساعدك في تطوير شخصيتك وأدائك في العمل :			
ملاحظات الرئيس المباشر		اسم الدورة المطلوبة	١
			٣
			٤
			٥

سادساً : ماهي الفترة المناسبة لحضور الدورة (الأشهر المقترحة) : ()

توقيع الرئيس المباشر :

توقيع الموظف :

أخي لأختي الموظف... :-

يسرنا أن نضع بين يديك هذه الإستمارة لمساعدتنا في تحديد احتياجاتك التدريبية لمدة ثلاث سنوات قادمة لذلك نأمل منك الدقة في تعبئة البيانات حيث أن تحديد احتياجاتك التدريبية بالشكل الصحيح لها بالغ الأثر في الإرتقاء بالعملية التدريبية في الكلية.

مع خالص الشكر والتقدير...

قسم الموارد البشرية

أولاً : بيانات أولية		
الاسم	المركز / القسم	
ثانياً : بيانات وظيفية		
١	المسمى الوظيفي	
٢	تاريخ التعيين	
المؤهل الدراسي	عدد سنوات الخبرة بالعمل الحالي	

ثالثاً : ملخص للتوظيفة الحالية	
رأي الرئيس المباشر	مآهي الواجبات والمهام الوظيفية التي تقوم بها
.....
.....
.....
.....

رابعاً : ما هي أهم المعوقات التي تواجهك في أداء عملك؟		
٤		١
٥		٢
٦		٣

خامساً : البرامج التدريبية التي ترى أنك بحاجة للإلتحاق بها وترتبط مباشرة بمهام عملك				
الدورات المطلوبة		رأي وتعليقات الرئيس المباشر		م
اسم الدورة		يستحق	لايستحق	
				١
				٢
				٣
				٤
				٥

سادساً : البرامج التدريبية التي ترى أنك بحاجة للإلتحاق بها وتساعدك في تطوير شخصيتك وادائك في العمل :			
اسم الدورة المطلوبة		ملاحظات الرئيس المباشر	م
			٢
			٣
			٤
			٥

سادساً : ماهي الفترة المناسبة لحضور الدورة (الأشهر المقترحة) : ()

توقيع الرئيس المباشر :

توقيع الموظف :

Translation of CPD topics

Suggested training programmes

Suggest training programme
Strategic training
Risk management
Change management
Electronic contracts' writing
Governance auditing
New approaches in Accounting
Auditing skills
Financial reports' preparation
Managing government treasury
Purchasing management
Electronic human resources
Successful skills in human resources
Electricity supply and maintenance
Managing infrastructure and its maintenance
The six dimension of management and quality assurance management
Managing administrative skills

Promoting female management skills
Managing services electronically
Educational design for electronic programme
FIGUAL computing software
Photoshop software
Flash (CS3) software
CCNA1
CCNA2
MCTIP server
MCTIP Enterpri Admis
Adobe After CS4
SPSS
Basic computing networks
Electronic libraries and its services
Electronic system in libraries
Indexing
Effective planning skills
Reports' preparation (Latex)
Reports' preparation and coordination's skills
Legal researcher preparation

Electronic stores' management
Creativity skills
Personality building and leaders' preparation
Trainers' preparation
Performance evaluation skills
Research methods
Electronic advance secretary
Communication skills
Decision making and problem solving
Presentation skills
Public relations' skills
Developing work system and modifying work complication
Modern administration in sport system
Effective driving skills and dealing with vehicles' breakdown
Hospitality skills
Electronic system leadership
Indexing and electronic archive
Career guidance and coaching skills
Goals' oriented management
Contracts' design

Computing maintenance and programming
International licence in computing management A+
JAVA-HTML-ASP
CCNP
DBA Oracle
Planning and managing windows server 8
Linux/Unix
Modern activities' and events' management
Theatre's directing
Policies and procedural analysis skills for registration and admission staff
Dealing with university level students' skills
Updated English language skills for university level students
Time management and dealing with work pressure
Website design

Ministry of Higher Education

Human Resource Section

Rustaq College for Applied Sciences

Directorate of Finance and

Administrative Affairs

Staff training needs' analysis form

Dear staff member,

We are pleased to offer this training needs' analysis form in order for us to be able to identify your needs for a period of forthcoming three years. You are kindly requested to accurately specify your needs so that we will be able to promote the provided training.

Human Resource Section

Personal information

Name	Centre/Section

Work information

Post	Date of appointment	Qualification	Year of experience

Job duties

What are your job's duties	Direct manager's opinion

Training Needs' Analysis form (Staff)

What are the obstacles that face you in your work?			
1		4	
2		5	
3		6	

Training programmes related to your work and you think that of your needs				
	Required training programmes		Direct manager's opinion	
	The name of the programme	Deserve	Not deserve	Comments
1				
2				
3				
4				

Personal training programmes that help your personality to promote your work		
Required training programmes		Direct manager's opinion
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
Suggested time to attend the intended programme:		

Appendix B : Ethics documentation



Dr. Abdullah Al-Shibli
Director General of Colleges of Applied Sciences
Ministry of Higher Education, Oman

Yaqoob Al-Ghatrifi
PhD Candidate, Institute of
Education
University of Reading, UK
y.al-ghatarify@pgr.reading.ac.uk
09-05-13

Dear Dr. Abdullah,


My name is Yaqoob Al-Ghatrifi, one of your academic teachers at Rustaq CAS in the English Department who is currently doing his PhD study in the United Kingdom as a part of the colleges' development.

I am writing to seek for permission to conduct my study as a part of my PhD requirements at the University of Reading, UK. The study is "An Investigation into the Colleges of Applied Sciences English Teachers' Perceptions of Professional Development in the Sultanate of Oman". The study will include three of your colleges; Rustaq CAS, Sohar CAS and Nizwa CAS. The three deans of the colleges, the Programme director, English, three Head of Departments and three level coordinators, English, four coordinators, twelve English Teachers from each college will be the sample of the study.

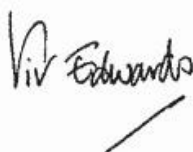
This study will attempt to contribute to the development of CPD practice in general and to the CAS context in particular. It will come up with a framework that can be used to promote CPD in the Colleges of Applied Sciences and can be adapted for the higher education institutions in Oman and can be elsewhere.

An information sheet describing the study in more details is attached to this letter. If you kindly need further explanation, you may wish to contact me or my academic supervisors (contact details are in the information sheet). Your cooperation is highly appreciated.

Sincerely yours



Yaqoob Al-Ghatrifi



**National Centre for
Language and Literacy**
University of Reading
London Road Campus
4 Redlands Avenue
Reading
RG1 5EX



التاريخ: 17/11/2013
رقم المرجع: ك.ع.ت\19\11\2013



الرقم: 1/6 / 1303 / 2013

المحترمين

الأفاضل/عمداء كليات العلوم التطبيقية

(الرستاق، صحار)

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته ... وبعد:

الموضوع: تسهيل مهمة الباحث: يعقوب الغطريفي

إشارة إلى ابتعاث الأفاضل/ يعقوب الغطريفي لنيل شهادة الدكتوراه في المملكة المتحدة، فإننا نرجو منكم التكرم بتسهيل مهمة المذكور لتطبيق أدوات البحث المعنون ب:

An Investigation into the Colleges of Applied Sciences English Teachers' Perceptions of Professional Development in the Sultanate of Oman

و تتضمن الدراسة إجراء مقابلات مع عميد الكلية ورئيس قسم اللغة الإنجليزية بالإضافة إلى بعض المدرسين من القسم.

مقدرين لكم كريم تعاونكم....

وتفضلوا بقبول فائق الاحترام....

د. عبدالله بن علي الشبلي

مدير عام كليات العلوم التطبيقية



وزارة التعليم العالي
كلية العلوم التطبيقية بصحار
قسم البريد والوثائق
الوارد
الرقم: 1/6 / 1303 / 2013
التاريخ: 17/11/2013
التصنيف:

نسخة إلى:
د. حليلة البدواوي
الملف



Participants Information Sheet



Researcher: Yaqoob Al-Ghatrifi

E-mail: y.al-ghatarify@pgr.reading.ac.uk

Supervisor: Professor Vivien Edwards

E-mail: v.k.edwards@reading.ac.uk

Project: An Investigation into the Colleges of Applied Sciences English Teachers' Perceptions of Professional Development in the Sultanate of Oman

You are kindly invited to join a study that investigates CAS English Teachers' perceptions of the current Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activities. You may want to ask the researcher for any further explanations beside the information given below. This research is supported by the Ministry of Higher Education, Sultanate of Oman and has the permission to proceed.

You are warmly invited to ask the researcher for any further explanations beside the information given below.

The Study

The study is a part of my PhD requirements at the Institute of Education, University of Reading in the UK. Its aim is to investigate the current CPD activities and its effectiveness through English teachers' perceptions. This study will attempt to contribute to the development of CPD practice in general and to the CAS context in particular. It will come up with a framework that can be used to promote CPD in the Colleges of Applied Sciences and can be adapted for the higher education institutions in Oman and can be elsewhere.

Why I have been chosen to take part?

You have been chosen because of the important role which you perform in the overview of English teaching within CAS.

What will happen if I take part?

If you agree, you will be invited to take part in a focus group interview lasting approximately one hour at a time and place convenient to you, which will, with your permission be recorded.

Is my participation obligatory?

No, your participation to the study is entirely voluntary and you have the right to withdraw at any time during the study without any repercussion by contacting the researcher.

What are the risks and benefits of taking part?

I anticipate that the findings of this study will be used to develop CPD in the Higher Education in Oman in general and in the CAS context in particular. This development may enhance the teachers' performance and the students' learning outcomes might be sustained as a result.

All the collected information about the participants during the research will be kept strictly confidential. All interview recordings will be destroyed after the end of the research. Their names or any contact details will not be recorded on the interviews' transcripts. My academic supervisors will have access to the transcripts (and the recordings for reliability purposes), but I will be the only person to have access to the original recordings. All identifying details will be changed in any publication resulting from this research.

I know how busy you are, but I highly value the information that your college can provide regarding the offered CPD, and I hope that you will be able and willing to contribute to this research project by giving the permission. If you do so, **please complete the attached consent form**. A summary of the results can be sent upon your request by sending an email to the address above.

This application has been reviewed following the procedures of the University Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct.

Appendix C

Themes and codes that used in the analysis

PD interpretation

The importance of PD

PD awareness

Existed CPD

Received support Less-experienced local

Received support Less-experienced expat

Incentives to PD

Opportunities for CPD

Managers' needs

Less-experienced local teachers' needs

Less-experienced ex-pat teachers' needs

More-experienced local teachers' needs

More-experienced ex-pat teachers' needs

Conducted needs' analysis

CPD needs

Teachers' feeling without support

Obstacles to CPD

Motivation and willingness

Officials

Appendix D

**WELCOME
TO
RUSTAQ COLLEGE OF APPLIED SCIENCES
MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION
SULTANATE OF OMAN**



ORIENTATION BOOKLET

COLLEGE FOREWORD

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VISION, MISSION STATEMENT, AND VALUES

VISION

The Colleges of Applied Sciences aspire to be among the finest institutions in Oman and the Gulf by the year 2015, focused on practical education in the core technologies and applied arts and sciences of the global era.

The Centers of Specialization in the six Colleges of Applied Sciences will be equipped with state-of-the-art resources and will be fully responsive to the changing requirements of Oman's economy and society. Centered in teaching, they will also engage in applied research at an international standard; and will have made substantial progressing toward achieving the status of Centers of Excellence.

While achieving an appropriate level of autonomy in their separate responsibilities as regional colleges, the six CAS are to function as an interdependent and integrated system, laying the foundations for possible future development as a university.

Graduates of the CAS will be well-skilled in the linguistic, technical, professional, personal and interpersonal competencies required to perform effectively in the dynamic national and international environments of the early 21st Century.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Colleges of Applied Sciences provide high quality programs grounded in problem-based learning methodologies that prepare students for employment in a global world, for graduate studies and as required for the on-going development of competent citizens who contribute to Oman's economy and society. Graduates will possess the skills necessary to integrate and apply knowledge in the workplace. Student outcomes are enhanced through active and productive partnerships in both higher education and employment.

VALUES

Since values underpin the assumptions, standards and ethical principles on which organizational behavior is founded, it is imperative that they are clearly articulated, recognized and acted upon.

As a central component of the developing culture of the CAS, values signal what is considered important, worthwhile and desirable. Strong and worthy values in harmony with the Vision and Mission are the foundation of quality in higher education institutions. Hence the CAS values should guide all activities, whether formal or informal, and whether those activities are internal or external to the colleges.

The central value of the CAS is a strong commitment to respect and enhancing Omani culture and identity. This value, a component of the main strategic goals, is a theme running through the CAS Strategic Plan.

The Colleges of Applied Sciences will be guided by the following core values:

Loyalty

Service

The Advancement of Knowledge

Creativity

Professionalism

Partnership

N.B. To know the College Executive bylaw of the Royal decree 62/2007 regulating the Colleges of Applied Sciences, staff can find the full official text, both in English and Arabic, at the following link.

https://drive.google.com/a/cas.edu.om/?usp=chrome_app#folders/0B1fNrsm1iXAUSzhCM25KN19Rckk

INITIAL STEPS DURING FIRST WEEK AT THE COLLEGE

- A representative from the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) will meet you at Muscat International airport / bus stand.
- You will be taken to a nearby hotel where you can stay for one day at the expense of the Ministry.
- A representative from Rustaq college of Applied Science will come to take you from Muscat (the capital) to Rustaq city and you will be taken to a nearby motel where you can stay as long as you like provided that the accommodation, electricity and water allowances will be subtracted from your salary.
- During the first 3 days you will be provided with transport to and from the College.
- A furniture allowance will be paid to you in the first three days.
- You will need to look for long term accommodation during your stay in the motel.
- Carry enough money to cover your expenses for a week or so.

After your arrival at the College you will meet with

- The Dean
- The Head of your Department
- College staff in the Administration and Finance Departments
- The Head of the Learning Resource Centre (LRC)
- College staff in the Admissions and Registration Department

Note: The Head of your Department may assist you to meet with the administrative staff.

PROCESSING IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS DURING THE FIRST WEEK

It is helpful to bring at least 16 passport type photos with you. These will be needed to apply for and register with the various ministries and departments. The photo should have a mid-blue background.

1. Resident's Card: The Human Resource (HR) Department will help you in the issuance of a Resident's Card. This involves a visit to the Police Station. You need to have a copy of your passport and a letter from the College. You will be given a form to fill in with your details at the Police Station. A representative from Service Support Department will escort you to the Police Station and will provide any help you might need.

2. Medical Card: You need two passport style photographs (4cmX6cm) and a letter from the College. For married staff, the photograph should include all your family members (spouse and children, if any). These documents will be taken to the local office

of the Ministry of Health. After a few days you will be provided with a Medical Card which will be valid for 2 years.

3. College Card / Name plate: The HR Department will provide you with a name badge. This should be worn whenever you are at College.

4. Driving Licence: If you already have a valid licence, you can apply directly to the Traffic Police for an Omani Driving Licence. However, this is only available for residents of neighbouring Gulf countries, Jordan, the EU countries, Canada, USA, New Zealand and Australia. For residents of other countries, you must take a test before being issued with a Driving Licence.

RECRUITMENT AND LEAVE-TAKINGS INFORMATION

Recruitment

1. Staff recruited from Hawthorn Institute:
 - Should fill in the *Decision to Receive Work* form.
 - A copy of passport + certificates
2. Temporary Contracts:
 - Should fill in the *Decision to Receive Work* form.
 - A copy of passport or identity card.
3. Omani staff recruited from the Ministry of Higher Education
 - Should fill in the *Decision to Receive Work* form.
 - A copy of the identity card
 - Fill in the CV form.
4. Non- Omani staff recruited from the Ministry of Higher Education
 - Should fill in the *Decision to Receive Work* form.
 - Original certificates
 - Fill in the CV form+ allowance form (accommodation, electricity and water) + furniture allowance form
 - Bring your passport stamped by the Ministry of Higher Education, and your medical checkup to get a resident's card.
 - Bring phone certificate to get a phone allowance

Leave-Takings

- The new staff can take a leave only after completing 6 months. For more information about leave- takings refer to the Executive by Law of Royal Decree 62/2007 Regulating The Colleges of Applied Sciences.
- If the staff takes more than 5 days leave, he/she should fill in the *Returning to Work Form*
- The staff can take an emergency leave for 5 days from the college and if needed can get other 5 days from the Directorate General.

FACULTY DRESS CODE

Oman, as a Muslim society has a conservative approach to dress in public. Teachers should dress professionally while at College. The following dress code is required:

Male: Smart / Business / Casual – business trousers, collared shirt, tie, covered shoes. A jacket is optional.

Female: Long skirt (not see-through or semi see-through), long sleeve blouses that do not expose the forearms, tailed business slacks. Clothes should not be tight fitting. Denim jeans, shorts, t-shirts, polo-shirts, sandals, thongs and sneakers / sports shoes are **not allowed**.

Teachers' **name tags** must be worn at all times while on campus.

ABOUT THE COLLEGES OF APPLIED SCIENCES

Through the Directorate General of the Colleges of Applied Sciences (CAS), the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) is responsible for the administration and management of six Colleges of Applied Sciences. The Colleges offer a variety of majors / courses and are located in the main regional cities of the Sultanate: Nizwa, Sohar, Al Rustaq, Ibri, Sur, and Salalah. The Colleges of Applied Sciences were established in 2007 by the Royal Decree 62/2007. However, they have a long history, beginning in the 1970s when they were established as teacher training institutions, awarding a two-year diploma in Education. In 1994 the Colleges converted to Colleges of Education, offering a four-year Bachelor Degree in Education. The first batch of education students graduated in 1998 with a BA Degree in Education in different fields (Islamic Studies, Arabic Language etc.) In 2007, since the mandate to train a sufficient supply of teachers had been fulfilled, approval was given to transform the Colleges of Education into Applied Sciences Colleges. Remaining under the jurisdiction of the MOHE, the Colleges currently offer seven degree programs – in Information Technology, International Business, Communication Studies, Design, Engineering, Applied Biotechnology and English Language for Teachers.

1. Al Rustaq College of Applied Sciences

The Al Rustaq College of Applied Sciences is approximately 140 km from Muscat. The College offers Bachelor Degrees in IT, International Business Administration, and English Language for Teachers. For more information, please visit www.cas.edu.om

General information about Al Rustaq

Al Rustaq is located in the Western Hajir Mountains about 140 km from Muscat. Rustaq was the ancient capital of Oman during the era of Imam Nasir bin Murshid al Ya'arubi. Today it is a fast developing city with a population over 65000, where the ancient and modern sit side by side. It is a small city with sufficient retail outlets to provide you with

all you need. There are two restored forts, one in Rustaq itself and one about 20 kms away (reportedly connected by a 23 kms underground tunnel). Rustaq is also surrounded by wadis (valley). There is a beach resort about 30 minutes' drive away with Western services, a health club, pool, and diving.

2. Nizwa College of Applied Sciences

The Nizwa College of Applied Sciences is located in the ancient town of Nizwa in the Dakhiliyah Governorate, about 174 km south of Muscat.

The Nizwa CAS is a centre of specialization in Communication Studies and in Design. The College awards Bachelor Degrees in Communication Studies (Digital Media, Media Management, Journalism, PR, and International Communications); and Design (Graphic, Spatial and Digital Design). Further, International Business Administration program is being offered in Nizwa.

For more information, please visit www.cas.edu.om

General information about Nizwa

Nizwa has a magnificent mountain backdrop and is about two hours' drive from Muscat. Nizwa is well known for its fort and for its "souk" or market place. Here you will find everything from live animals to fine gold. It is also near Bahla, which is the home of a fort currently being restored as a World Heritage Site. Just past Bahla is another restored fort, Jabreen, which is furnished to give one a clear idea of living conditions in the past. There are also Western- style hotels with pools and health clubs, and several restaurants.

3. Sohar College of Applied Sciences

Sohar College of Applied Sciences is located about 230 km west of Muscat. The Sohar region is considered one of the most important national tourist attractions because of its history and spectacular scenery. The College awards Bachelor Degrees in Information Technology (Software Development, Computer Networks and IT Security), and Engineering (Electrical, Chemical and Mechanical Engineering). For more information, please visit www.cas.edu.om

General information about Sohar

Sohar is on the coast about 2 hours' drive from Muscat and also about 2 hours' drive from Dubai. It was once the major port in Oman. It has a fort and a museum, a handicraft souk and many retail outlets and modern amenities. There are Western style hotels and restaurants. There are also wadis (valleys) nearby.

4. Ibri College of Applied Sciences

The Ibri College of Applied Sciences is 307 km from Muscat. The College awards Bachelor Degrees in Design and in Information Technology. For more information, please visit www.cas.edu.om

General information about Ibri

Ibri is a three hour drive from both Muscat and Dubai in the UAE. Ibri is a small town with sufficient retail outlets to provide you with all you need. It is close to Bat, which is a site of ancient burial tombs. There are also wadis nearby and wilderness areas ideal for exploration. There is a hotel with a restaurant. Nizwa is one and a half hours drive away. There is a Western style hotel with pools and health clubs and licensed restaurants.

5. Sur College of Applied Sciences

The Sur College of Applied Sciences is 337 km from Muscat. The College awards Bachelor Degrees in Applied Biotechnology, Information Technology, and Communication Studies. For more information, please visit www.cas.edu.om

General information about Sur

Sur is on the coast about three and a half hours drive from Muscat. It has many modern amenities and is the centre for traditional boat building - the Dhow sailing ship. It is also close to the nesting grounds of the giant green turtle and large schools of dolphins often visit the waters off the coast. It is a short trip into the true desert and to spectacular wadis. There are Western style hotels and restaurants.

6. Salalah College of Applied Sciences

The Salalah College of Applied Sciences is located in the southern city of Salalah in the Governorate of Dhofar, approximately 1023 km from Muscat. The College awards Bachelor Degrees in Information Technology (Software Development and IT Security), International Business Administration (International Business Management), and Communication Studies (Public Relations, International Communications and Digital Media). For more information, please visit www.cas.edu.om

General information about Salalah

Salalah is the second largest city in the Sultanate of Oman, a traditional stronghold and the birthplace of the present ruler, His Majesty, Sultan Qaboos Bin Said. It is in the far south of the country, about 1000 km from Muscat, in the famed Dhofar region. Famed throughout the centuries for the prized frankincense that grows within the region, Salalah became known popularly as the “perfume capital of Arabia”. As the metropolis of the province of Dhofar, it encompasses the archeological park of Al Baleed, a splendid city of antiquity that fell into decline in the sixteenth century, the nearby ruins of Samharum, now Khor Rori, an important port from the 3rd century BC to the 5th century AD, and the alleged burial place of the prophet Job at Jabal Gadu, some 45 km north west of the city. A shrine in the heart of Salalah is venerated as the resting place of Nabi Imran, the father of Hazrat Maryam.

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE SULTANATE OF OMAN

1. General Information about Oman

Area	309,500 sq km
Capital	Muscat
Population	2,773,479 (Census 2010)
Official language	Arabic
Religion	Islam
Currency	Omani Riyal= 2.59 USD (March 20, 2012)
Working week	Saturday – Wednesday. Some banks are open on Thursday and closed on Saturday. Retail shops and supermarkets are open every day. Many small businesses close for several hours during the afternoon.

	Friday is the Holy Day of the week.
Major Cities	Nizwa, Sohar, Salalah, Sur , Al Rustaq and Ibri
Climate	Summer from May – October with temperatures of 40 - 50 degrees Celsius in the north and interior. The rest of the year the maximum temperatures are in the pleasant mid 20's to low 30's with cool nights. Salalah has a humid, rainy season during The Khareef – July to September.

2. Muscat (The Capital)

- **Muscat** is the hub of Oman and is situated on the Gulf of Oman in the north-east. It is a city of amazing contrasts. The city is large and quite cosmopolitan.
- While it is decidedly **Islamic**, there are many forms of entertainment to cater for different tastes. Restaurants are varied and plentiful. There are English films in cinemas. There is a Royal Oman Symphony Orchestra and the recently complete Royal Opera House which has an extensive international range of musicians and performers. Western hotels also offer a variety of entertainment.
- The **Muttrah Souk** is an old, traditional souk. It is a must see where you can bargain over Omani silver and artefacts, spices, incense, clothing, shoes and Omani wooden chests, not to mention gold.
- Shopping is varied. There are a number of grocery stores with a wide variety of foodstuffs. In addition, there are fruit and vegetable outlets. Muscat has several **very large shopping malls** and many brands of electrical and retail goods may be purchased.
- If you don't have your own means of transport, the best form of transport is **taxis** - easily identified in white and orange. Negotiate your cost of travel to your destination before you take transport. Set price taxis are available at the airport. There are also various rental car companies which offer reliable service.

3. Omani Culture

As in any Middle Eastern country, religion is the centre of the culture. It dictates everything: dress, hygiene, diet, everything. The approach to life is "Inshallah", which literally means "Allah willing". Oman is the easternmost of the Arab countries. The majority of its people are Arabs with sizable minorities of Baloch and Swahili communities, besides foreign workers. The culture of Oman is deeply rooted in Islam. In the seventh century AD, Abdullah ibn Ibadh founded a unique form of Islam called Ibadhism. This has a large following in Oman apart from a good number of Shia and Sunni Muslims. Omanis are not only tolerant of the beliefs of different Muslim divisions; they are also tolerant towards believers of other faiths, who are allowed to practise their religion in churches and temples. Omanis strictly observe Islam especially during the month of Ramadan which all Muslims are obliged to fast.

The Omani national identity has evolved from its predominant Arab language and culture, its tribal organization, and Islam. Oman withstood attempts by classical Islamic empires to subdue the country, and the Portuguese invasion of the sixteenth century was confined to coastal ports and was terminated by national Omani resistance in the mid-seventeenth century.

With a great amount of oil revenue, Oman has modernized itself with a sound infrastructure, roads, communication systems, hospitals and places of tourist attraction. Women are increasingly participating in national activities. However, western influences are quite restricted in the nation as an attempt to safeguard the interests of religion and tradition. Thus, foreign teachers are advised to keep reasonable distance from their students, especially, female students.

Public modesty is a way of life in Oman, particularly in matters of dress. For Omanis this means covering all parts of the body, including head, arms and legs. Men wear dishdashas, which are usually white. You will also see other colours worn too; however, coloured dishdashas are not allowed at college or work environment. They also wear a turban (Musser) or cap on their heads. Women wear the Hijab on their heads and the Abayya, a black cloak worn over traditional or western clothes.

IMPORTANT DATES IN OMAN

1. Ramadan:

The holy month of Ramadan is a reflective period for Muslims and abstaining from physical needs. Though not confined to, the most obvious indication is fasting during the daylight hours. Therefore, to show respect, the non-Omani teachers are asked to not eat or drink in public areas. If you wish to know more, access the following website: <http://www.islam-inside.co.uk/Ramadan.htm>

2. Eid:

- a. **Eid Al-Fitr** – marks the end of the holy month of Ramadan
- b. **Eid Al-Adha** – commemorates the completion of the Hajj pilgrimage. If you wish to know more, access the following website <http://www.whatiseid.com/>

The following table illustrates the important dates during the year:

Holiday	Date (Islamic calendar)	Approx. Date (Gregorian Calendar)
Muslim New Year	1 Muharram	November
Prophet's birthday	12 Rabi II	March- April
Prophet's ascension	27 Rajab	July
Eid Al-Fitr	1 Shawaal	August
Eid Al-Adha	10 Dhul-Hijah	October

WHAT TO BRING

Almost anything can be bought in Muscat. The most important things to bring are clothes and shoes suitable for the climate and customs of the country. Clothing can be made locally at a very good price. Tailors abound. You may need to bring a light jacket for winter evenings. Hats and sunglasses are essential.

You will need to bring at least 16 passport photographs for various governmental agencies and for the College. It is best to have these on a mid-blue colour background as this is a common requirement.

THE CLIMATE

From May to October the maximum temperature can be quite intense - ranging from 40 - 50 degrees Celsius in the north and interior of the country. It is much cooler in the south during summer with maximum temperature ranging between 20-25^o C. During the rest of the year, the weather is a pleasant mid to late 20's during the day with cool nights. However, all buildings are air-conditioned and many are fitted with ceiling fans.

FINANCE

The Omani Riyal (OR) is divided into 1000 baisas and is tied to the United States' dollar. Your salary is usually paid at the end of the month and is paid directly into your local Omani bank account. When you open your bank account you will be issued an ATM card. ATMs are plentiful in all cities. Traveller's cheques clear instantly. Visa and MasterCard cards which are linked to international accounts can be used at ATM's but some attract a double charge. All credit cards are available. Please ask your bank for more information. The cost of living is quite low in cities other than Muscat where high rents influence expenses. You can sometimes negotiate a price for some items in some stores.

HOUSING

Hotel accommodation is readily available. You may need to seek help from colleagues or from the local community to find suitable longer term accommodation. Most people know someone somewhere who has accommodation available. Both furnished and unfurnished places are available. Ask the Director of Administration and Finance at the College for help. Often, it is worthwhile remaining in the hotel beyond the 3 days that the College pays for while you learn your way about.

CELL PHONE, LINE PHONE AND INTERNET CONNECTION

Connecting to a phone line is quite easy if there is a line connection already in place. You will need to complete some forms from a telephone provider, get a letter from the College, and pay a fee of about OR 7.00. Connection usually takes several weeks. You can also get a connection to the internet through this system. Connecting the telephone and

internet takes 2-4 weeks. If there is no landline connection it can take much longer than this.

A USB modem internet service is also available at Nawras and Omantel shops. Internet services are also available in all the Colleges for official work. Some Colleges also have wireless connections.

To purchase a mobile phone is very easy. A passport or Resident's Card is required to apply for prepaid mobile services. Prepaid services are provided by several companies, including Omantel and Nawras. Prepaid loading cards are available almost anywhere. You can purchase a SIM card for your phone at the airport by showing your passport. There are several cell phones companies available at the airport.

Only GSM phones work in Oman, and if you are from Canada or the United States, only tri-band and quad-band phones work.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS AND ADDRESSES

1. Ministry of Higher Education

Phone: 00968- 24340999

Fax: 00968-24340172

Website: www.mohe.gov.om

Address: Director General, Ministry of Higher Education, Oman, P.O. Box: 82 Muscat, Postal Code: 112, Murtafaat, Al Mataar.

2. College of Applied Sciences **Al Rustaq**

Phone: 00968-26876201

3. College of Applied Sciences **Nizwa**

Phone: 00968-25431144

4. College of Applied Sciences **Sohar**

Phone: 00968-26720155

5. College of Applied Sciences **Ibri**

Phone: 00968-25690143

6. College of Applied Sciences **Sur**

Phone: 00968-25546802

7. College of Applied Sciences **Salalah**

Phone: 00968-23226611

8. Emergency Police / Fire / Accident: 9999

Useful Websites and Telephone numbers

1. Ministry of Higher Education: Tel: 24340999 www.mohe.gov.om

2. Ministry of Tourism: Tel: 245-887-00 www.omantourism.gov.om

3. Royal Oman Police: Tel: 245-600-99 www.rop.gov.om

ORIENTATION PROGRAMME

The Orientation Programme for all new Faculty staff will be arranged by each College and may include the following activities:

1. **Dean's Welcome Address:** A welcoming address for new faculty by the Dean, highlighting the Ministry's commitment toward better facilities for the staff and the expectation that new staff will contribute toward quality of education and research.

2. **Providing informal opportunities for interaction with the new staff:** As a first activity, the new employee will be given time to introduce themselves, including information such as their previous institutional affiliation, courses they were teaching, and a brief description of their research.

3. **Introducing the general setup of the college and local community and guidelines for the new faculty:** A presentation about the College environment and local culture which will include the following:
 - a. **General setup of the College and the local community**
 - Location of College
 - Basic facilities which include the restaurant, Masjid, bank, internet, location of various offices and departments
 - Local residential areas
 - Shopping places
 - Tourist places
 - Banks
 - Main hospital and medical centres
 - Local transport
 - Local dress and language
 - Local people's attitude

4. **Introducing the Head of Department (Academic):** Each academic HOD will give a presentation which may include the following:
 - Department faculty profile and their areas of specialization.
 - Department research achievement
 - Detail of specialization / courses offered by the Department.
 - Details of students in the Department
 - Details about course material
 - Support of academic activities by the Department
 - Job responsibility
 - Staff expectations
 - Department environment

5. **Communicating general policies and procedures and introducing Heads of Departments (Non Academic):** This will include an introduction of the Departments and their respective heads. A presentation by each HOD may include the following:
 - A. **Head of LRC:** Functions, responsibilities, provision of books, laptop and IT related activities, future plans.
 - B. **Head of Student Services Centre:** Function and responsibilities of student affairs, their past activities and future plans.
 - C. **Head of Administration:** College facilities for staff, administrative policies and procedures related to HR policies. For example, introducing procedures regarding the completion of documents by new staff on their arrival, how to apply for leave (annual and emergency), office procedures and resignation procedures. This may include the following:
 - How to apply for a *Resident's Card*
 - How to apply for a *Family Visa*
 - How to open a *bank account*

- How to get *salary payment*
 - Payment of *bills*
 - How to apply for a *Medical Card*
 - How to get *annual* and *emergency leave*
 - *Lines of communication* within the College
 - *Resignation* procedures
- D. **Head of Finance:** Policies and procedures of accounts related to staff.
- E. **Head of Admission and Registration Centre:** Functions and responsibilities, examinations, students' registration, advising, and grading system.
- F. **Head of Career Development Centre:** Function and responsibilities, past performance and future plans.
- G. **Head of Scientific Research:** Research policies, past performance, future planning and College support.
- H. **Head of Mail and Documents Department:** Functions and responsibilities and procedures.
- I. **Head of Quality Assurance Department:** Process of quality assurance, expectation from all new staff and how to assure quality in teaching, research, office work and other related activities.
6. **College and city tour at the end of the Orientation Programme:** A short tour for the new employee will be arranged to see the different areas of the College including academic and non academics departments, cafeteria and book shop. A visit to the local area / community to see local culture and tradition will also be helpful.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Who do I see for my laptop and CD player?

Academic Support in the building by the front gate

2. How do I borrow books from the Language Resource Centre?

Approach the staff of the centre for assistance

3. Who do I see about printer and laptop problems?

IT support on level 1 of the Language Resource Centre

4. Who do I see regarding Blackboard and SIS?

IT support on level 1 of the Language Resource Centre

5. Who assigns your room?

HOD

6. How do I find out who my mentor is?

The Quality Assurance Coordinator

7. Where do I find mail when it arrives?

In the pigeon-holes on the ground floor beside the door facing the front of the college

8. Where do I get my course books?

The coordinator for that year or programme at your department

9. Where can students collect their course books?

The caravans beside the Language Resource Centre

10. Where do I lodge student absentee forms?

Ground floor of the Student Administration block

11. Where is the Department Common Room?

Room A012 on the Ground Floor

12. Where is the photocopy room?

At services department near the main gate

13. Where can I get stationery (eg photocopy paper, marker pens)

The HOD or the course Coordinator

14. Who do I contact if I cannot come to work?

The HOD

15. Can I buy meals on the campus?

Yes, there is a Teacher Cafeteria with reasonably priced meals. Deliveries to your office can be arranged.

16. Is smoking allowed?

No, the Rustaq College campus is a no-smoking zone. Please respect Omani culture in this regard.

AVERAGE COST OF LIVING

O. R* Average	\$ Average	Restaurant
1.88	4.91	Meal, Inexpensive Restaurant
15.34	23.77	Meal for 2, Mid-range Restaurant
		Combo Meal at McDonalds or Similar
.82	2.14	Cappuccino (regular)
.200	0.36	Coke/Pepsi (0.33 liter bottle)

.100	0.29	Water (0.5 liter bottle)
	Markets	
.53	1.39	Milk (regular), 1 liter
.41	1.09	Loaf of Fresh White Bread (500g)
1.27	3.32	Eggs (12)
3.72	9.68	Fresh Cheese (1kg)
2.23	5.81	Chicken Breasts (Boneless, Skinless), (1kg)
.79	2.06	Apples (1kg)
.66	1.74	Oranges (1kg)
.36	0.96	Potato (1kg)
.33	0.93	Water (1.5 liter bottle)
.200	0.25	Newspaper
	Sports And Leisure	
3.5	9	Cinema, International Release, 1 Seat
18.33	47.68	Fitness Club, Monthly Fee for 1 Adult
	Clothing And Shoes	
27	70.87	1 Pair of Levis 501 (Or Equivalent)
18	47.36	1 Summer Dress in a Chain Store (Zara, H&M, ...)
36	93.47	1 Pair of Nike Shoes
29	74.93	1 Pair of Men Leather Shoes
31	80.50	1 Pair of Women's Dress Shoes
8	20.50	1 T-shirt
19	50.00	Casual Shirt

*\$ 1 = 0.384 O. R

STRATEGIC GOAL 1: ALIGN GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES WITH THE MISSION, VISION AND VALUES

Objective 1.1: Optimise the Effective Operation of the Colleges of Applied Sciences

Strategy 1.1.1 Develop a comprehensive set of academic and administrative policies

Strategy 1.1.2 Define functions of all departments and identify processes and responsibilities

Objective 1.2 Review Central and College Management Structures

Strategy 1.2.1 Review the effectiveness of current structures in serving stakeholders

Objective 1.3 Develop a Model for the Governance of the CAS to be Adopted by 2015

Strategy 1.3.1 Undertake a critical review of relevant models

STRATEGIC GOAL 2: RAISE AWARENESS OF, AND ENGENDER PRIDE IN, THE COLLEGES

OF APPLIED SCIENCES

Objective 2.1: Raise Awareness of the CAS through an Effective Marketing Campaign

Strategy 2.1.1 Engage consultants to devise a marketing plan to raise awareness of the CAS

Strategy 2.1.2 Implement the marketing plan

Objective 2.2: Engender Pride in the CAS

Strategy 2.2.1 Encourage student participation in college activities

Strategy 2.2.2 Employ successful senior students as computer laboratory assistants, tutors/mentors to

Foundation and first-year students

Strategy 2.2.3 Provide senior students with space on the web server to display their CVs and portfolios

Objective 2.3 Value Omani Heritage and Culture and Enhance Awareness of Omani Identity

Strategy 2.3.1 Articulate key components of Omani heritage and culture in relevant CAS publications

STRATEGIC GOAL 3: ADVANCE STUDENT LEARNING

Objective 3.1 Attract and Retain Capable Students

Strategy 3.1.1 Ensure effective dissemination of CAS information to students and parents

Strategy 3.1.2 Introduce measures to help ensure that students admit in the CAS have the capability to succeed

Strategy 3.1.3 Improve student retention rates through support and remediation

Objective 3.2 Provide a Relevant Student-Centered Learning Environment

Strategy 3.2.1 Emphasize the problem-based approach to teaching and learning

Strategy 3.2.2 Continually develop all LRCs as state-of-the-art learning facilities

Strategy 3.2.3 Ensure that laboratories, IT & multimedia facilities and faculty offices are well-equipped

Strategy 3.2.4 Introduce curriculum components and extra-curricular activities that relate to Omani heritage, and culture

Strategy 3.2.5 Benchmark the quality of Student Services to International standards

Objective 3.3 Ensure that Student Outcomes are Fit-for-Purpose

Strategy 3.3.1 Ensure programs are relevant and prepare

students for employment

Strategy 3.3.2 Implement a graduate tracking system

Strategy 3.3.3 Ensure student outcomes are at an International standard

STRATEGIC GOAL 4: STRIVE FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Objective 4.1 Develop an Academic Plan for Excellence

Strategy 4.1.1 Perform a detailed environmental scan as a foundation for the Academic Plan

Strategy 4.1.2 Develop a plan for the progressive development of the Centres of Specialisation

Strategy 4.1.3 Develop an enrolment plan to support the degree plan

Strategy 4.1.4 Formulate the overall Academic Plan

Objective 4.2 Attain Accreditation and International Standards

Strategy 4.2.1 Design and implement an effective internal quality assurance system for the CAS

Objective 4.3: Support Faculty in Advancing Student Learning

Strategy 4.3.1 Ensure that faculty employ state-of-the-art instructional delivery methods

Strategy 4.3.2 Encourage faculty to participate in extra-curricular activities that support and advance student learning

Strategy 4.3.3 Ensure maximum and productive use of office hours to support students and advance learning

Objective 4.4 Encourage a High Standard of Scholarship and Applied Research

Strategy 4.4.1 Provide appropriate, enriching professional

development opportunities

Strategy 4.4.2 Develop an applied research capacity within each centre of Specialisation

Objective 4.5 Attract and Retain High Quality Academic Staff

Strategy 4.5.1 Develop and implement an effective recruitment plan for academic staff

Strategy 4.5.2 Develop and implement an effective faculty performance appraisal system

Objective 4.6 Raise Staff Morale

Strategy 4.6.1 Improve internal and cross-college communication

Strategy 4.6.2 Develop and implement an equitable workload policy

Strategy 4.6.3 Introduce incentives for outstanding performance

STRATEGIC GOAL 5: BUILD PARTNERSHIPS

Objective 5.1 Enhance Engagement with the Public and Private Sector

Strategy 5.1.1 Operate an effective student placement function to optimise student employment opportunities

Strategy 5.1.2 Establish a specialised career guidance system for prospective graduates

Strategy 5.1.3 Establish a regular program of industry experts as guest speakers

Strategy 5.1.4 Introduce and manage careers fairs in the CAS

Strategy 5.1.5 Develop an alumni association

Objective 5.2 Enhance Engagement with the Community

Strategy 5.2.1 Provide focused short courses suited to the needs of industry and business

Strategy 5.2.2 Provide a web-based job vacancy service

Strategy 5.2.3 Encourage joint use of college facilities by the community

Objective 5.3 Enhance Engagement with other Higher Education Institutions and with Accrediting Bodies

Strategy 5.3.1 Seek excellence through partnership and accreditation

Objective 5.4 Introduce a Knowledge Transfer Function

Strategy 5.4.1 Educate CAS staff re the funding, procedures and benefits of knowledge transfer

STRATEGIC GOAL 6: ACHIEVE SUSTAINABLE FUNDING RESOURCES

Objective 6.1 Develop Comprehensive Financial Reporting Mechanisms

Strategy 6.1.1 Provide training to heads of department regarding reporting costs on a systematic basis

Strategy 6.1.2 Set annual budgets for all college departments

Objective 6.2 Adopt a Common Funding System for the CAS

Strategy 6.2.1 Develop and introduce a formula to govern college budgets

Strategy 6.2.2 Develop and implement competitive, performance-based funding for applied research

Objective 6.3 Introduce Partial Student Contribution to Funding

Strategy 6.3.1 Introduce a system that allows a greater number of students to be admitted into the CAS

Strategy 6.3.2 Introduce support mechanisms to ensure equitable access

Strategy 6.3.3 Develop a target student population for

2015 for each college

Objective 6.4 Develop Income-Generating Activities

Strategy 6.4.1 Develop legal regulations for funding from sources other than the government

Strategy 6.4.2 Identify and pilot potential income-generating activities

Strategy 6.4.3 Develop and implement an operational plan for income-generating activities

Objective 6.5 Increase Efficiency in CAS Operations and Services

Strategy 6.5.1 Review ancillary services with a view to outsourcing

Appendix E, Focus group discussion transcript

More Experienced Teachers Expat Rustaq

Re: Researcher, M: ..., H: ..., N: ..., D: ..., Ma: ..., A: ...

Re Thank you very much for coming umm so if I ask you about PD in general what do you think of PD its importance in the learning and teaching processes umm this start of discussion

Ma well let me start I think it's very important because one teacher from different you know years of experience need together share their knowledge and learn from each other and discuss for sure it will be both even the experienced ones will also learn from the less experienced and for sure most of the umm of the benefit will go to the less experienced teachers so I believe it's very important

Re it is very important

N it's a change to refresh the fresh ones ideas way of thinking line of thought umm it's a chance also to exchange ideas and experiences umm to inform ourselves about things that we didn't know before there is always new things everywhere

Re knowledge is developing and changing?

N of course very rapidly and I don't think we have the ability to cope as such alone and individually unless we be supported by our peers and our colleagues and yah certainly

A and most of us are involved in teacher education and what we teach our students is umm sort of a philosophy of life-education and life-long learning and maybe it's important for us as teachers to practice it ourselves and also what we need to do is to keep abreast of changes that are happening in education in a system in which work and the schools where we work but also generally in umm in sort of in terms of education world-wide to keep abreast of new ideas

Re definitely

N but educational context this is my view is very complex very complicated these days and two eyes will not be enough at all to cross the whole thing the whole prospective of the in the whole view I mean so they need others we need others to share twelve eyes like us here much better than two eyes

Re Dr. ...

D umm I look at as negative prospective as a survival strategy as a teacher now you cannot survive without developing yourself because your members is backing up knowledge and selling it and giving to students and knowledge keeps on changing rapidly know and umm we most we

know need most PD than ever because the commodity you are selling to students keeps on changing quite fast and you have to get to a place with this so you have to keep on improving yourself otherwise you will feel outdated umm and you cannot survive as a lecturer

N that's true

D in the West you know they talk about this with a tenure system if you don't if people feel that you are not marketable anymore you have to leave you cannot gain tenure so you have to quit university because of that so you have to keep on updating yourself so at the bottom line it's a strategy for you so survive that as a teacher as a lecturer and as a human being as my colleague's picked it up that's a life-long learning one of the main ideas is selling now is life-long learning so you have the best thing you do to personalize it and as a human being you need this you need life-long learning to keep on developing yourself to keep at base with the whole challenge of life anywhere

Re yah thank you very much indeed

N I like this idea of umm it's the change in our role as teachers that emphasizes the need for PD we are not anymore prompters you know and umm less of educators sort of speak we are just facilitators we are more facilitators not just umm so as facilitators and if we look at education as a commodity we need to update ourselves all the time with the changes that happens to this kind of commodity and this of course will be done through PD

Re umm right yah interesting

N it's also the competition in the field itself right? Yah we have to be competitors see we are for example all very young (laughing) but there are of people who are younger than us and who come with fresh ideas with new things and we need to cope and who umm

A and I think also one of the important thing for us to learn how to access knowledge and how to teach our students to access knowledge in the past it was easy because knowledge was limited now with the internet and with umm you know globalization it's impossible to have umm we are no longer the keepers of knowledge so we need to umm for ourselves we need to find out ways of accessing knowledge and teach our students how to access knowledge

D more in management it's more than knowledge it is to knowledge management aspect which is new to us

M and evaluation as well umm I agree with all of my colleagues have said all unarguable but I think that umm the PD really is only meaningful if you look at it in the context of the umm institution you are working in and if the institution itself is keeping abreast in with changes in education and if it is appropriate for PD to take place in umm in an institution like this and to be

frank umm the PD obviously loadable thing life-long education keeps you young and keeps you cutting edge but I don't see in this institution there is a massive need for it

Re there isn't a massive need for it?

M No because I don't think that the kind of education which we end up giving to the students umm

Re challenging?

M is challenging and that the students don't challenge us

Re OK this is interesting

M and I think that the college doesn't encourage them to challenge us

Re right OK

A but they may that's why maybe that's why there is more need for personal PD rather than at institutional level because I don't think they are getting it at institutional level

M no no

A what they are supplying is not what you want so on a personal level people are exploring options going to conferences themselves umm studying further

Re individual initiative?

A they are doing it themselves to keep themselves fresh umm certainly in the last couple of years I haven't seen it really supported that much at the college level they have other things at fantastic time from 2 to 4 on the Monday afternoon on a Sunday umm Saturday umm you remember we used to have a PD from two to four at most umm exactly but at time when people are tired umm you know and they used to have sessions where people different people run I think that we need something and Mark they used to run you know were asked to do umm asked to do workshops and lectures so and so on

Re I have attended one by the way

A yah but when then you see yourself at a time when people are tired and not really in the mood to be developed

Re or need may be?

A yah yah or maybe they haven't any need at all that's what I am saying may be put it's to check a box yes we have PD but I don't think that there is much support here for us at the college at all

N there is this I am sorry Dr. umm

D no no but I think what Mark is eluding to is much deeper than that he's spoken about the structural handicaps to PD where the whole environment doesn't prompt you to umm to develop yourself the students don't have time they are not encouraged there is no system for them no structure for them

M they are not interested

D to learn so we don't feel any umm I don't say threat but you don't feel that need as a teacher as a lecturer you are not encouraged to update your programme to renew it again I keep on comparing with other places where in the subject like literature you are not suppose to teach and work more than two years so in two years you have the minute you start teaching that book you really think of what I am going to teach for the next two years so that's how they plan ahead so there is a challenge for you umm that the system itself doesn't allow to sleep umm to teach the same book for ten years the complex system of updating so now if you want to update even a small part programme it has to go all the way up in the hierarchy and then come back after a long time

Re bureaucratic?

D yah all this does not encourage PD there are all hurdles in front of PD the students don't challenge you the system doesn't the system forces you to stay where you are

Re right so we will come to the obstacles later on about that umm if I can say I mean about one the umm your needs as you mentioned you know about umm

N to access knowledge and to teachers to learn

Re it's not institutional you know level it's personal level what exactly your needs as experienced teachers in order to cope you know whatever umm your needs?

M in PD?

Re yeah

M umm

D I feel again with umm the word experienced is double edge if you think of experience at the number of years you have spent we have somehow getting old in the system and you have the feeling that the new generations are more savvy technology savvy they are probably better than us in managing knowledge this umm a near where I feel the gap now I feel that I am a bit backward compare to my new colleagues in managing knowledge and accessing knowledge and managing it and backing it so this is like probably I feel this is like something like a general need

umm the other aspect of need is specific subject specific where you feel in your specialization you feel that the knowledge again is moving ahead

Re subject knowledge

D yah subject knowledge so that's personalized it's very hard to track it down because it comes in every person but the general one is probably the knowledge management aspect I feel that all the generations umm are quite lagging in this

Re yah

M but then we are forced to there is interface between developments in knowledge which we are suppose to be managing and the requirements of course delivery which are kind of static and ossified umm in ah our ability to change our ability to control what we do in the classroom is very much dependent on approval of what the course descriptions are and ask delivering those course descriptions or else changing them as we are supposed to be right now with umm the permission and whatever of the requisite authorities umm there is savvy that's a tricky kind of interface as far as I can see

Re so you control it

M umm

D I feel that there is some margin of flexibility in the delivery mode now people are encouraged now to just encouraged to use technology umm but again there is a talk but there is no walk there is some OK fine you are encouraged to use technology for the delivery mode but then there is nothing to do that there is no training special training for this unless you have to go by yourself and

M umm

D and do that

M you know the suggestion is impression but you know one of the impression I have here actually we are more radical than the people who are younger than us in some ways we are the ones who are prepared to take chances and throw out the rule books and I am not just talking about teachers but the students as well in umm for the students this has been count as paradise this is you know this like tick the boxes count how of these have been delivered but for us many of us we are much more radical in the way we see education we see and and this ought to be perfect for us but I think that there is a kind of Sinicism that's crept in because of the nature of the way of the institution and the way that we are expected to work here but whenever for speaking personally whenever I have a chance to follow my druthers and do the things I think

education should be about is kind of kind like is this exam is this going to be in the test you know

All aha

M it's umm there is that problem you know

N so it is structural than and organizational umm on away there is a policy there is this course outline which is quite stagnant for me for example it's been five years now here and it's the same course description umm we are we have I mean started a kind of try to create a new course description hopefully during the next semester but for the five past years it was the same right? And the same textbook it depends on me as teacher to kind of enrich the syllabus with things from here and there but

Re as supplementary materials?

N supplementary materials but don't imagine that I have ever could be able to put my hands on supplementary materials that our younger than two years old no almost they are older than two years old while we are told that else where you are only to teach the book two years and mostly they are quite umm updated

Re yah but I mean if you suggest this to the HOD or whomever just I mean umm

N it's bureaucracy again for example yah Dr. George will tell OK bring the title I bring the title and the number and everything and then this is a process that takes a long time the book will not arrive today not even tomorrow

Re so if you just I mean plan it ahead yourself as a teacher

D there is an Omani concern because again we go back to the policy umm the policy is to blame because here if you adopt a book as a textbook the college has to provide to each student so they have to buy them big quantities

Re right

D yah so if you keep in changing every two years the textbook it means that you are going to buy one thousand books every two years that becomes a major overhead in the budget that they cannot afford

N free education is not a merit all the time

Re yah

D we told them the best thing to do way with this system and give the students money to let them manage their own books

Re umm

D yes if you come to the American literature and take one book to umm this year within two years so the college has to provide one thousand copies for that batch and within two years that thing has to stay there the old book and they have to get another one and after two years the same thing

Re so I mean the books are not given to the students once they are done? The books are taken

D they return them

N they return them

Re OK aha yah OK

N and there will be a problem in the store umm

D before each batch you need a special store you end up with accumulation of books unused

Re so this is the system again?

D yes this is the system

M and then of course the follow one from that is that the students have the answers written in the books

N yah

M so there are translations in the books so nothing is fresh so after the first batch the books have been used are useless as far as teaching is concern because the students oh everything is done we don't need to come

Re everything is done there

N nothing is like a blue print I mean umm

M I mean I have to go in a minute because I have umm

Re yah please yourself

M before I go I mean this may be pertinent or may not I was thinking the other day about the qualifications you know and about how we struggle to get qualifications for the work we do and I was thinking in umm I have never been challenged by the work I do as much as I was in getting the qualifications to do it there is a kind of a kind of an anomalous situation to me (laughing) in a way is that we have to get umm this high you all have much high levels of qualifications than I do but even with my qualification I have never been given work or I could probably count the number of times I have had to I have been challenged by the work I do on the finger on one hand

and here very rarely

Re and that's of course as Vygotsky you know theory you know ZPD Zone Approximate Development for our learners if you know is not demanding enough there is no learning even for us you know

M yah

Re if there is no challenge

M no but I mean that I think is a serious issue that we are not challenged by the material we are not challenged by the students and so in what sense is PD laughing in requisite of this job

A but you see that I actually go back to it's been personal because you are not expected challenged by the students

M yes I agree with you

A and you are not expected to be challenge by the institution you make the challenge yourself

M yah

A I do really think it's personal

N yah you are umm

D I think it's intrinsic motivation that can drive for this

N and I mean by time you create a kind of competitive environment in a way I mean look at us for example when we engaged when one of us will engage himself or herself in a kind of umm CPD programme may be the others I mean it also contagious isn't it?

A but I have to say that there has been things offered I give the example of this computer we did last umm it's a whole year ago we did a computer course that was offered by some umm organizations with Cambridge OK so we did it and now it's a whole year later and we are small but we suppose to get a certificate the company that stands it got millions has never bothered to give us certificates

All laughing

Re so you are not given certificate yet

A no we haven't had it and that's a whole year ago and that should be in my CV and should be updated and I cannot put on my CV because whichever stupid organization is hasn't given us the thing that we have done and completed a year ago

N by the way, ten days ago they held a kind of graduation they claim that 28 thousand people

have gone through these courses in Oman

A where is the certificate?

N yah I heard it

Ma 28 thousand in Oman?

Re is it related to Oxford course?

A it's Cambridge yah

N Salalah abu Ghazala and Cambridge

Re oh no

D this project owns a millions projects in human resources by the Omani government but to me the more probably question we got that scheme what did we do with it how much has it changed our life how much did it change our delivery system

A oh I have updated my Power Points and I can I have to I have discovered that I can actually take screen shots on my computer and put it umm really it is umm it's updated

D I think this is what matter us most

A I have updated my computer skills absolutely I felt it was a beneficial course

Re you know I like the idea when you say you take the initiative personally towards your development you know it's not the case

N Yaqoob you know even the IDELTM course that we went through

A yah

N it was again personal initiative especially for our part for example it was totally and look at us now after a year what have we done with it? We have used it on personal terms right? But we haven't been given the chance may be umm to umm

Re to show our talent

N to display knowledge to share knowledge with the community sort of experience

Re yah yah so umm

D by the way I have feeling here that PD in the college we have been in limited understandingably

Re we have what?

A limited understanding

D in the college I feel that whenever you talk to the management about PD what they expect you to do is attend conference and publish

Re only one part

D which is very limited which again at the very side publication is probably the outcome of PD again I can't explain this is it because they perceive PD as your responsibility as a lecturer not theirs or because they want just to dissolve themselves from the financial obligation of doing that so it's always portrait us as something that the teacher has to do we are even asked now you remember the checklist for the QA what have you done for PD and I have the intension to write to them what have you done?

Re in order to get me done something

D yah I want to reflect this is the institution have you laid any background any platform at least for this

N and there is another issue Yaqoob there is trouble Sunday cut me of expat send Omanis you see for example us as expats umm participating into conferences not supported by the college unless the paper is relevant to some Omani specific and even if you do that you can be confronted with some people who would decide that no it is not from their point of view and you will be deprived umm the support so umm you have to go totally on your own even the days the two days or three days

A you have to take leave

N from your own umm

Ma exactly that what happened to me last year I presented a paper in SQU last year and they deduct that day from my umm

A from your salary

Ma from my salary

N no support at all

Ma instead for example just supporting me or helping me I didn't want any for example financial support it is SQU here I went by my care

N but this is not unfair to us by the way

Ma but they said I had to sign a paper that I went without the approval although I got the

approval from Dr. ... (HOD) but the paper came from the deanship and I assigned and there was cut off

N and Yaqoob don't think that this is unfair to us as expats this is unfair for the whole process

Re definitely

N because when I do a paper and I am an expat I am also motivating others who are Omanis who are young who are fresher who are less experience as well to do their own right? If I don't if I recline they will recline too I mean they are ignoring this part very much and on the other hand for the Omanis the umm the administration every semester or every beginning of the year something they send them a kind of template to check again the what do they call it? Training needs whatever and they tell them frankly there is a statement there that it is not you who decides where to go after all it is us who will decide

All laughing

N just to express your need go and check that form please

Re yah definitely I will analyze that

Ma not only this by the way now for example I have proposed a paper in Dhofar university it was accepted and I sent an email to the organizing team to put I mean to schedule my session on Saturday because I can't take permission on Sunday and they said OK we have scheduled you on Sunday

N Saturday

Ma Saturday because here if I ask for a day off to go and present umm to represent the college they wouldn't

A you will be panelized

Ma they would not appreciated

Re panelized?

A yah they take from your salary you have to take even they gets you off your salary

D Yaqoob we discussed this we went together in quality assurance and I want to relate this to what we have been doing and trying to talk to people then this issue centralized system of PD is hearting people because people express their needs but when it goes there they come back with a plan of planning sessions during the year that are not relevant to anybody so nobody understands how this decision has been taken how these lists of courses have been selected

Re may be because they don't want people to go and they are just listing you know in terms of listing

D but they still wasting the money getting the umm trainers here

Re OK they do get trainers

D yah basically there is some sort of umm something hard to understand to me Oman is one of the highest Arab countries in human resource development

Re right

D this programme we have been talking about the Cambridge thing costs the government hundred millions to train people so there is some money there the problem is in the implementation so the money allocated to the higher education the system is ran centrally I see the staff express their needs every year they are filling forms most of the time the forms come in the wrong time in June July somewhere there where most people are not there

Re or busy

D yah and they give you very short time to decide what you need so people do that anyway they have learnt to cope with that

Re I need to see that form

D you find that in the HR with Miss ...

N requirements

D and then at the beginning of the year when the list of training sessions come people feel that it's not relevant to them because I was in QA I was pushing to analyze and do some job specifications so we don't specify the needs according to individuals according to the mission this is your mission as a teacher this what you suppose to do and from there we work out your needs so the PD becomes directly relevant to what you are doing

Re not to your needs

D yah yes so there is still some resistance somewhere to specifying the umm job specifications themselves to applying them to put them explicit and this is hearting the whole PD to me

Re of course

D because when you know what you suppose to do as a teacher you know what you can what you have what skills you mastered and what skills you need and then they have the six colleges become very easy to manage now we are done all our lecturers know power point all our

lecturers how to sign in BB all our lecturers now how to do this so the umm it becomes very specific optimized but they are not doing this now

Re umm what about reflection let's say? What about you know mentoring you help other teachers you have got colleagues for example because you are experienced and you want to support them I mean does the system allow you like for example the time

N again it do it is done on personal

A ad hoc personal basis

N ad hoc personal basis

A there is nothing allocate no specific time is allocated but you do assist that for example if you in your subject team and you are teaching a new teacher you assist them and you help them or mentor them but it is not umm centralized

Re and it's not credited to you as a teacher experienced teacher

D no no

A no no

D no time allocating for this so basically it umm given him your lectures that's all

N not even in the appraisal I mean it should be taken in the appraisal right?

Re definitely because you are you know you are mentor now and you have been allocated in this college as a teacher and umm as a mentor as well and there are certain number of teachers new teachers who are assigned to you you know teach them to assist them and this will be accredited on your appraisal

A this is not formalized

N all o the Omani staff except one Dr. ... are very fresh or most of them were students for Alison and umm

A all of them

N all of them right?

N for me for example three of them were my students one from Nizwa and two here in Rustaq during the umm

D there is some practice again in formal

N and Dr. ... before I forget just and in fact we act toward them like they are our students and

you know for example for myself I feel that the people whom I want to be better than myself right? Are my sons and my students

Ma yah

N these two categories or in fact it is one category so I really strive hard to make them better to show them how to access to be better right?

Re yah

N but then this is not recognized in my

Re yah unfortunately

N in my appraisal after all

D yah the mentor system again unfortunately what happens yah there is informal practice to put fresh teachers with old teachers in each subject

Re that's development

D yah so we don't they don't feel safe enough to give somebody or whole batch of new teachers in your subject so it's always senior less senior and then a fresh together to the best possible we try to accommodate but what happens here that the senior is going to tell the others what to do and the West guys they will give them even their lectures their slides so this is how the mentor system has one has gone down to umm

Re yah I got point this is the system again it's not encouraging you you know because as you said now new teachers are coming here you just pass them because whatever you just pass them your notes for example if you are allowed or just I mean generous if you can do it once

N you know why do you pass them your notes because of the unified exams at the end of the term I want to make sure that Yaqoob will teach everything the way I do to my section

D because the exams are standardized does not allow for any difference between us they must know the same words

Ma laughing

D the same single word so it's and because again because it's not acknowledged

N percentage I mean the percentage at the end will fail us me and umm

D I don't have special time to mentor my new colleague so because it is something additional to me the easiest thing to me is just go and give him the lectures just to make sure that he does exactly like you a copy of you for the safety of the final examinations and to me I because I don't

have time for tha

N if this mentoring was to be redesigned rescheduled umm re-planned it goes as an incentive into my appraisal system

Re yah of course

N if there is time allotted to it I mean it will be done in a different manner

Re so again the system is the main obstacle to umm

A it seems to be yes but the question to ask is who is behind the system

N yah the dramatic brains behind the system I may go back to this idea of participating into conferences I told you for example as expats if we go for the support we need to write something with Omani specific I did it not last year the year before in a conference in Beirut right? And I was denied the support why? Because somebody in the administration umm write the conference title is international conference on Arabic Language "Arabic Language International Conference" and they said you are an English teacher umm I said I my PhD is in translation and linguistics and my paper is about umm what was it? Institutions Arabic Task of the teaching of Arabic for speakers of other languages and they said no this is not relevant to your field in this college

Ma yah laughing

N they said you are an English teacher I said I am not even an English teacher I don't teach English as per say but I mean it came to know about and umm

D even for Omanis I saw some Omani applications been turned down simply because this guy has gone once this year

N yah

D so it is now allowed for the second time

N yah this is another reason it's only one time

D and it's a non told policy there is nothing written to this but they do it yah oh he has done once so why the second time

N yah all of these are speculations umm a very personal initiative and bias as well

Re bias yah

N bias I mean umm by the way it does not mean I mean as you said the example you delivered is part Omani person who has gone once he needs deprived to go for the second time is it

attending conferences is it once a year umm

Re by the way, it's not the government it's some individual

N no of course not

Re it's some individuals as you said the government as

N this is dramatic brains Yaqoob by the way look at the British Council events when I first arrived in Rustaq that was five years ago the first two years for example umm we were usually umm supported by a bus from the college that would take us

Re I can recall that

N remember? Now two or three years no we do it on our own

Re even transport is not given?

N yah even transport

D and you feel opportunities are not taken

N yah it's free opportunity as well include socializing and being introduced to new people and umm seeing these things and you know it's not easy that you come here from eight to four and leave at four thirty from here driving to Muscat and coming back you have gone through that

Re yah by that time you will be fully exhausted just you end up just eating you know and umm

A and going to sleep laughing

Re going to sleep yah

D this is the way I am aware that our colleagues in the IT they have taken again a local initiative within the department and they are running symposium every two weeks so every two weeks one of them has to present something to his colleagues and they get feedback and they are also doing like umm group presentations for umm their projects and they are taking the opportunity of the opportunity of presentation made by the students in their projects for the graduation as a platform for discussion for them and I saw that the I live with two of them in the office and it's generating a lot of heated discussion there where I feel there is some of professional thing there there is some learning even to the teachers themselves

N yah certainly

D again I feel that we could be able to do that but the size of the department the problem there are running on fifteen teachers we are running on fifty something

Ma sixty I think

D again it's a large department and I feel that it would have been better if the ELT has been at least split from the foundation programme because they have their own needs and we have our own

Re as a faculty of education

N we are not a faculty we are a high school with umm

Re well at least you have got graduates of English teachers

D well the department officially yah

Re some teachers are graduated from her

A lots lots and lots yah

N but you know I went through this experience umm two weeks ago I was sent to attend students' presentations with Dr..... they are from business administration students and they worked to present their projects and I was there to asses with and yah it's very illuminating experience in fact and the discussion with was for me it was quite beneficial

Re yah if you want to take the initiatives what I mean what incentives do you umm you know look for? I mean from the Ministry let's say

A time

Re time?

A time there is a finance umm there is no time given for any kind of personal professional development it's not you are not for example if you ask as I have umm I have asked next week is no contact I am a student and I have asked to take one day leave and I have been given a hard time about it

Re wow, that time what other incentives you are looking for?

D you know something you umm

Re the appraisal you mentioned

N the appraisal yah

Re the appraisal should be recognized

N it should be

A i don't think we should talk about incentives umm incentives are very so disappointed with

expats so I wouldn't you to talk about it seriously

Re umm I mean

A especially with the new royal decree so what's the incentive is that? Do you understand

D for the first time now there is a formal segregation between the foreigners and the locals in salaries now for the first time then we are excluded

N we are binding by our contracts from now on

D from the new decree

A so now absolutely no incentive at all not financial anyway

N no

A again I think each person response in the personal capacity

Re definitely yeah

D I think what I expect from the ministry at this level for this government institutions is to review the legal and the structural platforms to the college to make compatible with the PD it seems that it's been long time ago

Re they need to revisit it?

D they have to at least to set you a legal platform to recognize mentoring to recognize umm all these formally they have to give it time umm otherwise then you can work but now anything you do at the end of the day again I have been through many cases where people take initiatives and they umm

Ma they are being penalized

A laughing

Ma they have cut it from my salary because I present laughing

N and of course you presented it in the name of Rustaq college

Ma and I presented in Oman in SQU I did not for example go for anywhere else

A you see

Ma I did not for example go anywhere else I didn't ask for any financial support

N no I went to three international conferences presenting in the name of Rustaq college without any incentives

A yah

Re and you were penalized?

N not penalized but not supported

Ma OK support umm support is very important

N and of course the leave is cut from my days yah

A so you were penalized you have to take a leave

Re that's penalized

A and now under the new dispensation if you take leave during teaching time you personally you have to find a substitute for your classes that's the new thing now

Re the new thing in-house

A that's only here if you are absent and you know for leave or whatever conference you name it someone has to take your class you have go and find somebody to take your class

D it's your problem again we go back to the same thing that PD is your problem and anything that comes you have to settle it

A yah

Re interesting

N should we go and participate as free lancers laughing

Ma laughing

A we do laughing

Re yah so I mean if I mean a part from that if I ask you personally do you have any personal future plan for PD? Apart from whatever you know is going on here

A yah I do I am busy I am doing my doctorate and I have been doing it now for seven years and why has it taken seven years because I have absolutely no support from the college at all I have asked for limited hours I have asked to go home early and in fact I get doubled when I asked

All laughing

A so that's why it's taken so long and I have just tackle to myself when I think you know they ask for PD and they ask you to extend yourself and then when you do you get nothing so that's why I am saying to you at the end of the day it's not about the institution it's not about the country it's not about where you work it's personal for me absolutely there is nothing to do I have just

happened to be here and happened to do my research here and what is annoying is actually I am doing my research in this college so at the end of the day

Re your fieldwork is here?

A my fieldwork is here and that's why I am here if it wasn't here I would have gone ages ago but my fieldwork is here I am studying my subjects are here my participants are here but you get absolutely no support at all

Re do people know about that?

Ma they know I think yah me the same case I am doing my PhD you know work demands family social relations and I am suffering a lot and I feel that I am lagging behind and no support at all and for example Dr. George knows that I am doing my PhD and even for example to go to UK for example to see my supervisor is another you know

Re issue?

Ma big headache

A laughing

Ma yah take the approval from here and you know about the Visa

Re and plus if you want to just you know what's that programme it's band here umm

A the computer programme?

Re yah I am always using it that's the programme is band here umm

A Skype

D Skype?

A yes you can't even use Skype with your supervisor

Re laughing

A not legally anyway because people are doing it illegally but you cannot illegally Skype with your supervisor because it's not supported in Oman

Re what a bitty yah

A but Al Hamdulillah one of my supervisors has transferred to Oman laughing

Re Al Hamdulillah (thanks God)

N lucky you laughing

Re she is lucky, Dr... you wana say something?

D laughing I don't know in this respect by the way I feel that Oman is even worse because Omanis are not allowed enrolled into any courses unless they take leave from their work so you cannot get them a degree and at the same time you are working here

Re as a part timer?

D yes

Re really?

D they even check passports now to show that you are physically outside the country where you took the course

N yah and now this is a kind of measurement against distance learning and the like because they don't recognize distance learning as umm

D for them they are covering fake degrees but they have taken it quite too far to put another hurdle in front of PD so somebody wants to work at night to secrify his family time to sit there and study somewhere else this is a problem so I think yah in this case if they don't give to Omani don't expect to be given laughing umm

Ma you are right yah

D if I have the authority I would go to the basic thing to me I would go and umm develop job description and from there

Re you can start?

D yes and from there anyone of my teachers will just go through the job description and umm we can analyze it together what are the skills required for each one of this of these missions and then from there exactly identify your needs and then I can work on them personally I am doing that I am trying to take again course online umm distance learning I identify my needs by myself and try to work on them

Re tackle them?

D yah now I am more into statistics because I feel that this is something that I need for my supervision of any thesis again umm again for PD I started to offer myself to supervise outside this institution because they don't have thesis here I am given myself for free to Malaysian Universities to take to part in any supervision panel just to keep myself updated again as Mark was saying I am looking for the challenge and that created in me the need to improve my statistical skills to be at that level but again it remains personal and unless you have the internal

drive specially we don't have umm I am PhD I would never to go to get a professor

A I might not ever get mine laughing

Re at least now he is much better laughing he got his PhD

N keep young

D but it's really heart

N once you get your PhD you go on the other part

D she has about 15 contribution articles and all they require to get associate is four articles she has three times she has a professor value now yes but she still cannot get

Re well I mean weird what about international you know if it's not done what about the international recognition

N what do I do with international recognition I need it here in my work context

Re well if you get internationally I guess they will

D you get still punished because she is a foreigner if she gets associate professor from outside and she wants to submit here she will be terminated and re-contracted in a lower salary so she has to do all umm

N laughing

D yah if I go to associate now I will be going down three hundred rials in my salary

N with the new scheme our salaries are already lost almost 33% of their basic value yah telling you of course what do you expect with the new scheme there will be inflation but our salaries as expats are bound with our contracts for example I receive umm whatever this whatever will lose 33% at least

D yah

A ah it's getting very depressing Yaqoob next question (laughing)

All (laughing)

N there is one thing I want to add Yaqoob I think you need to look at creating awareness for this PD among young Omanis I feel that they are not aware of the importance of PD I don't blame them because they have not been told they haven't been informed about that or introduced to the concept in their BA I am sure of that and then the MA that they have gone through one year in fact less than one year even which I keep calling commercial MA

Re well I mean you know it's stroke me when you said that because teachers here unfortunately they are umm you know

N they don't know even how to write a research paper let's be frank about that

Re and even there pedagogical skills are questionable

N yah

Re because you know they need some time it's not only the BA and that's one they are done from their BA and they go abroad for a year umm

A they are lacking as teachers they haven't been in the classrooms

Re and they are considered as a full-time teachers

A they need to go into the classroom and teach first before they do their Masters

N the pedagogy they have earned earlier during their BA programme is meant to teach in Cycle one and Cycle two but umm

A but not at college level

N but they immediately jump to college level and they are only older say two years than their students

D to be fair for the Omani new batches they keep on fighting for PD and one of the dissatisfaction factors they will tell you we don't have training

N yah

D that's why whenever the training is coming they are trying to umm anything that looks closest to them and just go for it but they do voice umm

Re may be they feel the lack

D of course yah umm they start to realize that yes they need to improve and they receive complaints from students and they cannot students run away from their sections and they go to other people of course they may feel happy that they have less few students but at the end of the day it will hurt them I have something I need to improve myself if I want to be marketable but I saw a lot of Omanis

N oh yah this is the word underline being marketable when you feel you are in your zone in you kind of safety zone you don't need to challenge just like Mark has mentioned right? If these young Omanis feel that they are safe in their own zones and they are not bind by contracts

D they are here to stay yah

N or never or may not terminated right? They will stay here forever so where is umm

Re that's another thing about the system you know if yah plenty of things to do about the system

N again appraisals, incentives, opportunities and all these things

Re this is really interesting and I really appreciate it I have got a very rich data thank you very much do you want anything to add

A no we want you to enjoy your transcription now laughing

All laughing

Appendix F

Questions that were used in the focus group discussions and the interviews

Focus group discussion

What do you think teachers' professional development mean?

Do you think that it is important in the learning and teaching processes? Why?

How do you develop yourself as a teacher?

Do you support your less-experienced colleagues? How? (For more-experienced-teachers)

Do you learn from each other?

Do you seek support from your more-experienced colleagues? How? (For less-experienced teachers)

What sort of opportunities for CPD are offered in your college?

Are your CPD needs addressed? How?

What do you think your CPD needs are?

Interviews

What do you think teachers' professional development mean?

Do you think that it is important in the learning and teaching processes? Why?

What sort of incentives do you provide for your teachers' development?

What are the offered opportunities for CPD for teachers?

What are the obstacles for teachers' development in the college?

How can teachers' development be promoted?

How do you know the teachers' CPD needs? (Administrators)

How do you develop your teachers?

