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Surfacing academic integrity via authentic & integrated assessment

Introduction & Overview:

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

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

Programme vision/goals include:

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

'Signature' programme features:

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

SINCE 2014/15:

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

Assessment & Feedback in Higher Education (5 ECTS)

Core module:
Perspectives in Teaching & Learning in Higher Education
(5 ECTS)

Curriculum Design in Higher Education (5 ECTS)

Additional modules rotate in/out of suite in line with participant interests & institutional priorities (5 ECTS each)

Administrative support & pastoral support from programme team

Programme structure: Core + 2

1. **M-level/L9** award
2. Participants complete **one core 5 ECTS module plus two others** as per their own interests
3. Programme should be **completed within a 3 year window**
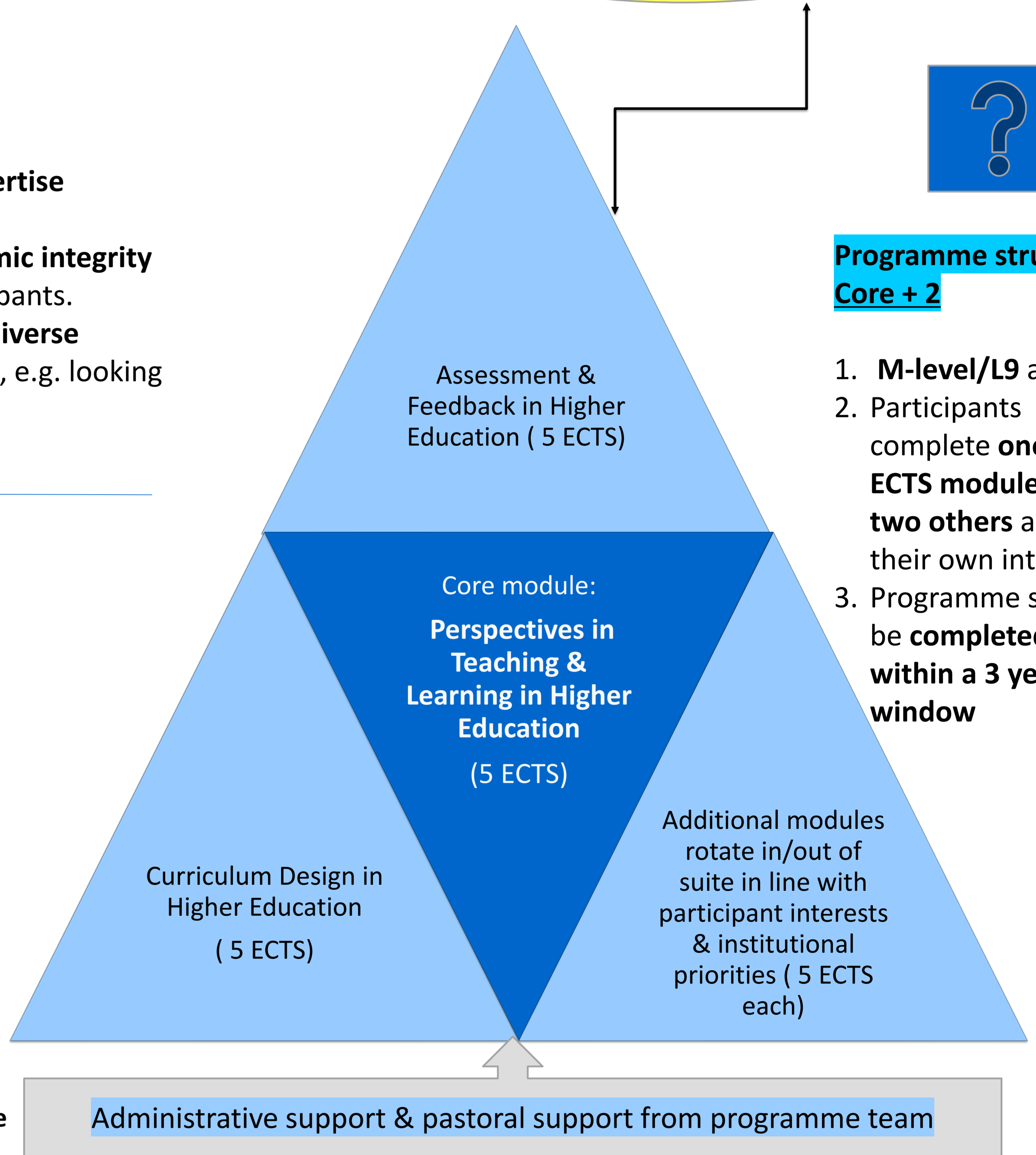
Why 'force' engagement with non-essay style assessment to surface academic integrity discussions?

1. **Modules are geared to impact on practice**, not solely develop participant awareness of pedagogical theories. **Alternative assessments enable close alignment to professional teaching/assessment practice.**

2. **Module participants mostly hold terminal/PhD degrees,** e.g. candidates are aware of how to 'game' traditional written assessments, e.g. to get an essay 'over the line' with surface level engagement in concepts/the literature. **Alternative assessment can drive candidates to engage with a teaching certificate beyond a 'box tick' mentality.**

3. **Module participants are often unaware of the breadth and diversity of assessment practices**. Candidates are supported to **engage experientially** with a broader range of assessment modalities and to reflect on their application in professional practice.

4. **Assessment diversity** creates opportunities for peer learning and discussion around **challenges to academic integrity both globally and at the discipline level** (e.g. beyond the plagiarism discourse).

5. Candidates are supported to reflect on **strengths and weaknesses of existing assessment approaches** in use in their own disciplines (e.g. essays) and to **consider where/how academic integrity can be upheld through a range of practices and approaches.**

Assessment modalities typically engaged with/ encountered by participants:

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

Key Takeaways:

1. **Formalised educator development in teaching and learning** (e.g. SpCert awards) **enhances educator assessment literacy and academic integrity literacy.**

2. **Educator experiences of 'alternative' assessment** (e.g. modular/ integrated across the SpCert) **can scaffold the development of their own assessment literacy.**

3. **Assessment authenticity and optionality (**e.g. personalisation/ usable outputs) **support assessment integrity.**

4. **Driving participants to experience non-traditional essay assessment encourages them to experiment with alternative assessments in their own practice.**

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

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