

University of Liverpool: Accreditation and the PSF 2023 drive strategic change

The University of Liverpool achieves educational excellence by exploiting the potential of the Professional Standards Framework (PSF 2023) and accredited provision. This strategy is integral to the University's Education Strategy Action Plan.

Professor Gavin Brown, Pro Vice-Chancellor Education (PVC)¹ explained that aligning institutional frameworks like the Liverpool Curriculum Framework with the PSF has enabled staff to develop 'stellar educational practices that generate student success, underpinned by flexible and inclusive initiatives for enhancement'.

Staff are strongly encouraged and supported to engage in professional development. They cannot be promoted without fellowship or a teaching qualification. Promotion applications show how practice has been transformed as a result. New collaborations across disciplines have emerged.

Gavin is confident that 'there are tangible benefits' and 'Our students are the benefactors. We invest a lot of time, effort and money... and it's very worthwhile. He emphasises the important role of the organisation which delivers CPD, the Leadership, Organisational, Professional and Academic Development Academy (The Academy) in achieving Liverpool's strategic ambitions.

PVC Gavin values the Advance HE (re)accreditation process as 'a periodic sanity check, to make sure that we're still trying to do the right things at the right time and in the right ways and that's always helpful, so it's good to get that validation and therefore revalidation back'.

The Liverpool approach to professional learning features defined pathways for different categories of staff. Dr Sue Bolt, Head of Academic Development, explains 'I'm trying to connect [CPD] with the strategy, connect it with people, connect it across different institutions or different departments, ... and I wanted to put people first...provision is adapted to need, and participants are working from values rather than requirements.... one size workshops don't work; one size doesn't fit all'. Staged learning opportunities promote 'teaching excellence, leadership and scholarship' and support line managers to hold meaningful discussions with their staff. Sue echoed the PVC's positive perspective that engagement with educational development is 'very collaborative; it's transformational, it's not transactional'.

Advice to senior colleagues

When asked what advice the PVC would give to a colleague in his role, he recommended:

- 1 **Use the PSF and Fellowship as tools to support strategic goals around staff development to enhance the student learning experience.**
- 2 **Provide staff with flexible and inclusive opportunities for enhancement to suit their personal context and career development plans.**
- 3 **Invest in an experienced team to lead the provision and empower them to act.**
- 4 **Use (re)accreditation as an opportunity to check that the right approaches are still being taken towards achieving strategic aims.**

¹ Interview held on 12 May 2025

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