

Utilising the Professional Standards Framework for teaching and supporting learning for strategic transformation

Co-creating an accredited CPD scheme with stakeholders

—

Nathan Roberts and Stephen Rutherford
Cardiff University, UK

Edited by Jenny Lawrence, Mary Fitzpatrick and Adam Craik

Contents

1	Situation	2
1.1	A brief profile of Cardiff University	2
2	Task	2
2.1	Committing to valuing and promoting teaching excellence	2
3	Action	2
3.1	Building the Education Fellowship Programmes with stakeholders	2
4	Result	4
4.1	Introducing a new Education Fellowship Scheme at scale	4
5	Reflection	5
6	Peer reflection	5
6.1	Gemma Witton, SFHEA, Educational Developer and Dr Phil Gravestock, PFHEA, Dean, College of Learning and Teaching, University of Wolverhampton, UK	5
7	References	6

1 Situation

1.1 A brief profile of Cardiff University

Cardiff University is a member of the research-intensive association of UK universities, the Russell Group, and aims to blend its teaching and research excellence to provide an exceptional, world-class student experience. Cardiff University is the largest university in Wales and has 33,190 students (QAA, 2020) and around 7,000 staff, including approximately 3,000 FTE academic staff and a substantial number of professional services staff in roles related to the support of learning and teaching.

2 Task

2.1 Committing to valuing and promoting teaching excellence

Cardiff University's education and students sub-strategy makes a commitment to value and promote teaching excellence including actions to:

- + provide a programme of initial and continuing professional development that supports the improvement and enhancement of leadership, management and delivery of teaching
- + support staff who teach and support learning and teaching to work towards internal and external recognition
- + recognise the important role played by graduate tutors and demonstrators, and support them to develop high-quality teaching practices, and provide structured and well-supported opportunities to be part of our teaching community.

These aims emphasise supporting new staff, established staff and postgraduates who teach. We then committed to developing a suite of Education Fellowship Programmes designed to meet these aims.

3 Action

3.1 Building the Education Fellowship Programmes with stakeholders

The opportunity to build an entirely new educational continuing professional development (CPD) programme is rare. We wanted to take a step back to consider and reflect on 'What do our teaching staff actually need to know in order to thrive in their role and provide the learning experiences we wish for our students?'. Starting from this position within the Cardiff Learning and Teaching Academy (the university's hub for educational development and specialist teams in learning and teaching), we ran a large-scale, wholly collaborative exercise with stakeholders of all kinds to understand the developmental needs and preferences of our specific learning community. The outcome was a new, comprehensive, accessible framework that could support staff throughout their careers and which combined individual needs, institutional strategic priorities and the dimensions of practice established in the PSF.

As a first step, we assembled a large group of 40+ staff comprised of early career and established lecturers, learning technologists and information specialists, directors of learning and teaching, directors of research, heads of school, lab technicians and National Teaching Fellows. They collaboratively devised what became our ‘commandments’: a set of principles that we were to commit to throughout the subsequent design process.

Table 1. The core ‘commandments’ for educational CPD gathered from stakeholders

Principle <i>Our Fellowship programmes will be:</i>	Implications
Valued and recognised	Celebrated, resourced, Advance HE accredited, senior managers and line managers positive and supportive. Recognised in workload allocations.
Supported	Participants feel supported and can access coaching, advice and guidance. Developing a community of practice.
Well designed and delivered	Represent good practice, provide a coherent journey through the PSF Descriptors, not boring.
Not burdensome or overwhelming	‘Reflection-rich and assessment-light’, practice-focused. The ability to build assessments ‘little and often’.
Practice focused	Theory aligned to practice, aimed at enhancing the educational skills across the university.
Inclusive	Inclusive curricula and inclusive opportunities for multiple career pathways (academic and professional services) to engage.
Flexible	Granular, with journey ‘stop-offs’.

These were handed to three equally professionally diverse working groups organised along PSF descriptor lines, separate design groups for Associate Fellow (D1), Fellow (D2) and Senior Fellow (D3), and an overall steering group. These gathered wider input, had extensive discussions, and devised curricula and core themes for the new programmes. Proposals were further refined through exercises such as ‘[Arena, Blended, Connected](#)’ sessions (rapid, hands-on, visual storyboarding workshops), to ensure that strategic elements were appropriately embedded. Content was also shaped by ‘student champions’ (current students who worked with the Learning and Teaching Academy) who were asked to identify key issues and devise resources for use in the programmes.

The result was a new suite of Advance HE-accredited Education Fellowship Programmes for Associate (D1), Fellow (D2) and Senior (D3) Fellowships, including fully facilitated D1 and D2 ‘programmes’ of five to seven monthly workshops for people new to teaching and semi-facilitated ‘schemes’ for each Fellowship descriptor, aimed at more experienced colleagues. To ensure accessibility and open up opportunities for participation, blended and fully online options were made available.

Table 2. The CU Education Fellowship Programmes

Facilitated workshop programmes	Bespoke support for experienced staff
	Fellow Development Scheme (Senior Fellow)
Fellowship Programme New academic staff, PS staff with learning support roles	Fellow Development Scheme (Fellow)
Associate Fellowship Programme PGRs teaching, PS staff with some learning support	Fellow Development Scheme (Associate)
Mentors and community of practice	

To avoid overloading participants, assessment is centred around a portfolio of bite-sized pieces that can be produced as they progress through the programmes. Mini thematic blogs are linked by a narrative and each Senior Fellow portfolio includes case studies aligned to institutional priorities. Engagement with a supportive and reflective ‘peer review’ exercise is aimed at encouraging cross-fertilisation of ideas between disciplines and each participant is allocated a mentor to support their progress. Each element of the portfolio, and all workshops and activities, are explicitly aligned with specific dimensions of practice and descriptors of the PSF. Importantly, a supporting business case was approved that enabled the sustained resourcing of an expanded delivery team and workload allocation for participants, mentors and assessors.

4 Result

4.1 Introducing a new Education Fellowship Scheme at scale

We first piloted our programmes in March 2021, so at the time of writing 14 months on, we are a work in progress. To date, we have 177 Associate Fellow, 168 Fellow and 49 Senior Fellow participants, with high demand evident across all levels. Gaining Fellowship is a probationary requirement for new lecturers but many others are choosing to embark on the programmes voluntarily as a result of the visible, collaborative, inclusive and supportive ethos that began at the design phase. Participant satisfaction levels have been consistently high and qualitative feedback emphasises the positive impact of the workshops, support, peer-review process and reflective assessment. For example, from a Fellow pilot participant:

“The tutors and my mentor, in particular, were fantastic. I’ve learned so much from the course, all of which I’ll be able to put into practice as I develop a new module this year. I could not recommend it highly enough.”

Perhaps the most valuable outcome from the collaborative co-design approach is the sustained community support and buy-in. We have around 50 mentors and assessors from 17 schools supporting the programmes, and these numbers are increasing. Successful participants frequently offer support as mentors or assessors for subsequent cohorts and contribution and participation in the programme is workload allocated. Through this integrated and structurally embedded approach, we are continuing the collaborative ethos and changing practices across the institution.

5 Reflection

Claire Morgan, PFHEA, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Education and Student Experience

The redesign of our academic CPD was part of a portfolio of projects aimed at valuing and promoting teaching excellence at Cardiff University. This was a valuable opportunity for co-creation and colleagues from across the university were invited to be part of this, shaping the design and delivery of the Education Fellowship Programmes. The PSF provided a crucial framework for our thinking and enabled us to shape our CPD offering to meet the needs of all staff who teach or support learning and teaching. It was important to give this work time and support. For long-term success, we also needed to get the structures and resources right: a new delivery team was established and workload allocation approved for participants, mentors and assessors. We are already seeing the benefits of taking this approach as staff progress through the programmes and describe how their practice has been transformed.

6 Peer reflection

6.1 Gemma Witton, SFHEA, Educational Developer and Dr Phil Gravestock, PFHEA, Dean, College of Learning and Teaching, University of Wolverhampton, UK

The collaborative methods adopted by Cardiff University has prompted the University of Wolverhampton to consider the opportunities that Cardiff's process provides as we approach reaccreditation of our Fellowship scheme. The University of Wolverhampton is a modern university in the UK, with a strong widening participation agenda and around 20,000 students. While we have quite a different strategic focus, we find the Cardiff approach inspiring.

We are particularly interested that Cardiff reached out to ‘Student Champions’ and asked what was important to them in relation to teaching and learning – a reminder that the student perspective can easily be lost in initiatives aimed exclusively at staff. If we use our forthcoming reaccreditation as an opportunity to reimagine our existing scheme, then taking time to reflect on what elements of our scheme are working, and the evidence of impact that we have for this, as well as seeking out feedback from colleagues and students, will be of crucial importance to meeting our strategic aim of excellence in inclusive teaching and student support.

The community-produced ‘commandments’ reinforced the importance of creating spaces and protecting time for colleagues to engage in CPD in a meaningful way. The assessment strategy using PSF-focused workshops and associated activities has highlighted that there is scope for us to explore a more scaffolded route to fellowship for colleagues who would not traditionally engage with our accredited Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice in Higher Education (accredited to award Associate and Fellow and to support those with existing fellowship as they work towards recognition as Senior or Principal Fellows).

7 References

QAA (2020) Quality Enhancement Review of Cardiff University: Outcome Report.
https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/reports/cardiff-university-qer-outcome-20.pdf?sfvrsn=e5facc81_8
[accessed 1 June 2022]



Contact us

General enquiries

+44 (0) 3300 416201

enquiries@advance-he.ac.uk

www.advance-he.ac.uk

Media enquiries

+44 (0) 1904 717500

communications@advance-he.ac.uk

www.advance-he.ac.uk/contact-us

 **in f** @AdvanceHE

Advance HE helps HE and research be the best they can be.

We are a member-led, sector-owned charity that works with institutions and higher education across the world to improve higher education for staff, students and society. We are experts in higher education with a particular focus on enhancing teaching and learning, effective governance, leadership development and tackling inequalities through our equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) work.

Our strategic goals to enhance confidence and trust in HE, address systemic inequalities and advance education to meet the evolving needs of students and society, support the work of our members and the HE sector. We deliver our support through professional development programmes and events, Fellowships, awards, student surveys and research, providing strategic change and consultancy services and through membership (including accreditation of teaching and learning, equality charters, knowledge and resources).

Advance HE is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales no. 04931031. Registered as a charity in England and Wales no. 1101607 Registered as a charity in Scotland no. SC043946. The Advance HE logo should not be used without our permission.

© 2022 Advance HE. All rights reserved.

The views expressed in this publication are those of the author and not necessarily those of Advance HE. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or any storage and retrieval system without the written permission of the copyright owner. Such permission will normally be granted for non-commercial, educational purposes provided that due acknowledgement is given.

To request copies of this report in large print or in a different format, please contact the Marketing and Communications Team at Advance HE:
+44 (0) 3300 416201 or publications@advance-he.ac.uk