

# Rebalancing promotion in the HE sector: is teaching excellence being rewarded?



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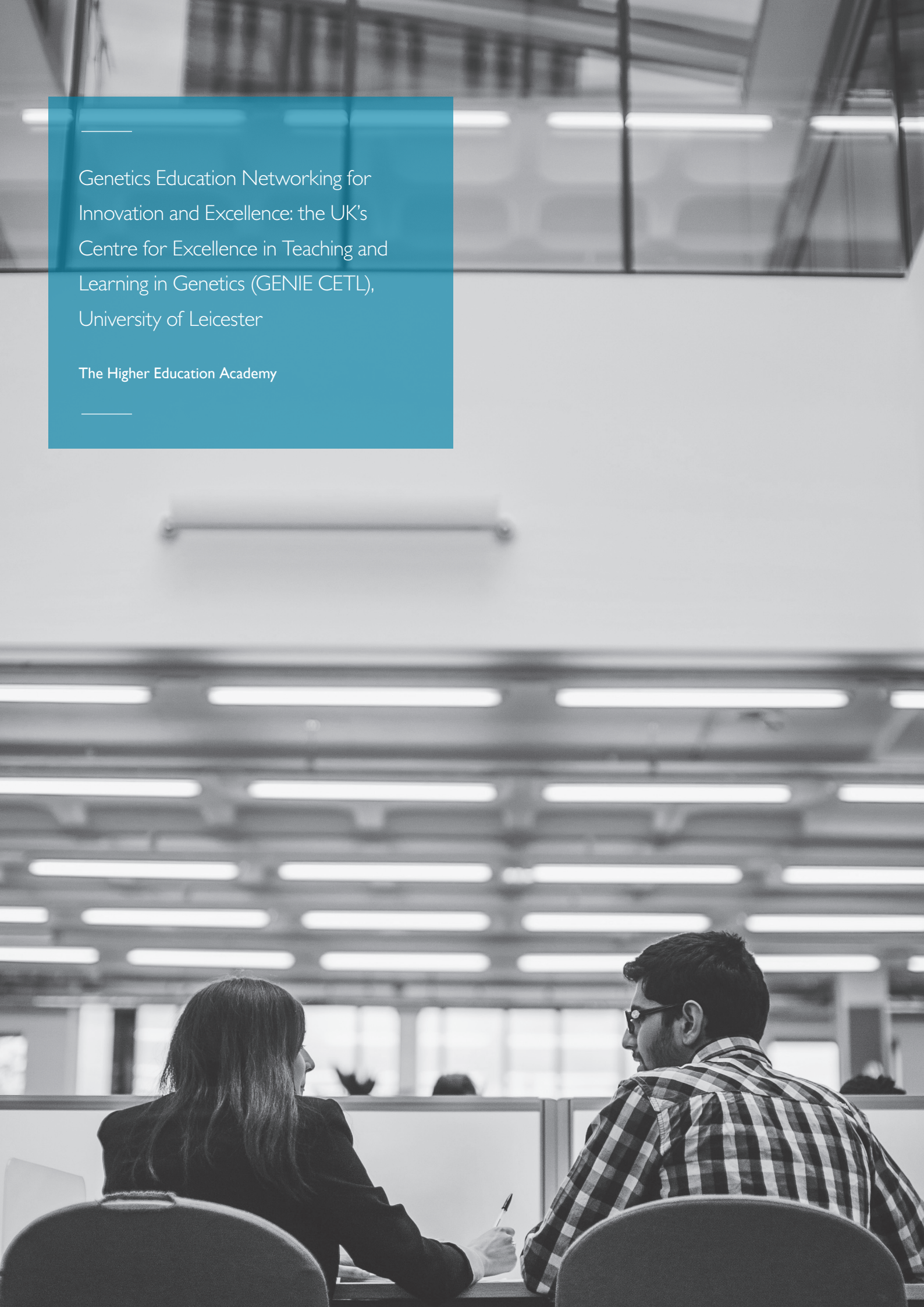
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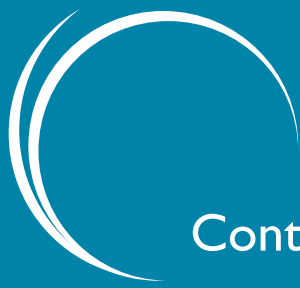
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Genetics Education Networking for  
Innovation and Excellence: the UK's  
Centre for Excellence in Teaching and  
Learning in Genetics (GENIE CETL),  
University of Leicester

The Higher Education Academy

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# Contents

Section		Page
	<b>Foreword by Professor Craig Mahoney</b>	<b>4</b>
	<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>5</b>
	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>6</b>
	<b>Background</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Comparing Policy Trends</b>	<b>10</b>
	Summary of HEA/Genie CETL 2009 reports	10
	Then and now: changes to promotion policies since 2009	11
	Methodological considerations	11
	Policies publically accessible on the internet	12
	Use of teaching and learning criteria in promotion policies	13
	Structure of Promotion Pathways	17
	Three-track pathway	17
	Two-track pathway	18
	Single-track pathway	19
<b>2</b>	<b>Career Case Studies</b>	<b>21</b>
	Conflict between subject specific research and teaching activities	21
	Ceiling on promotion for teaching and learning activities	24
	Status of staff in teaching-focussed posts	26
	Movement between institutions for career progression	27
	Lack of career flexibility	27
	Scholarship and pedagogic research	28
<b>3</b>	<b>Criteria and Evidence for Promotion</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>34</b>
	Development of a flexible framework of criteria	34
	Changing the culture	35
	Giving incentives and support to institutions	35
<b>5</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>36</b>
	<b>Reference List</b>	<b>37</b>

## Foreword

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Students value and deserve excellent teaching. And with “students at the heart of system” and similarly expressed sentiment in higher education policies of governments and assemblies from across the United Kingdom, it follows that teaching should be recognised on an equal footing alongside research, particularly when career prospects and promotions are being considered in universities and colleges delivering higher education.

This report is the third in a series looking at reward and recognition of teaching in higher education. The first two reports, both published in 2009, presented a somewhat depressing picture of the status of academics dedicated to teaching and pedagogy and, moreover, a less than encouraging outlook for their career prospects when compared with their research- focused colleagues.

This report paints a brighter picture and potentially a more promising outlook. It is clear from the evidence gathered from institutions surveyed across the mission groups in the UK that there has been a significant and positive shift to construct policies which incorporate teaching excellence as criteria for promotion and career enhancement. This move by these institutions should be welcomed and applauded. What is rather less encouraging, however, is the evidence in the case studies in the report which points to the gap between policy and implementation. Teaching, it appears, all too often remains the junior partner to research. The problem, the reports suggests, is two-fold: an embedded culture in which teaching is perhaps undervalued in relation to research and the absence of robust criteria to measure excellence in teaching in contrast to those available of the measurement of research (for example, publication and grant income). Only when this culture changes and relevant criteria are articulated and accepted, will the true value of these new policies be realised and academics more focused on teaching be properly recognised side-by-side with research and researchers.

Culture change requires leadership and energy. The HEA does, and will continue, to offer its support to institutions in bringing about change to recognise and reward excellent teaching: our change programmes and consultancy can help support the necessary cultural shift that is clearly identified in this report; the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) provides the building blocks for criteria in promotion and evidence from this report and from another recent report, *Measuring the Impact of the UK Professional Standards Framework for Teaching and Supporting Learning* (HEA 2013) indicates that it is being used to underpin promotion policies; the National Teaching Fellowship Scheme, along with the HEA’s Student-Led Teaching Awards are high value indicators of teaching excellence. All these instruments are in place to help and provide valuable external metrics which can be incorporated into promotions criteria alongside those for research.

This report shows that the momentum for change is there. If students really are “at the heart of the system” – and I believe they are - they deserve the best learning and teaching experience; and that will only be achieved if we value and properly reward those who teach them.



**Professor Craig Mahoney,  
Chief Executive, Higher Education Academy.**



## Executive Summary

Supporting staff by rewarding and recognising teaching activities is central to obtaining an excellent student experience. In this work we identify the current situation and the challenges presented to the HE sector; and suggest approaches to culture changes at all levels within institutions.

Our previous studies reported in 2009 (1,2)<sup>1</sup> provided evidence that teaching and learning activities are often not recognised or rewarded in contrast to subject-specific research, and that institutional policies and practice vary widely in the way that teaching is considered and used for promotion of staff. This work was identified in the white paper (3) for higher education as being a major report of the challenges faced. We have now surveyed the progress in the sector by determining routes which are currently described for reward and recognition of teaching and learning in 55 different institutions. There is undoubtedly progress with criteria, and in many cases ways in which these can be measured, presented. The question remains what effect are these having on individuals? We have collected over 70 case studies aimed at identifying how teaching and learning activities have been recognised and how they have contributed to career progressions. Our data covers individuals in a range of institutions, disciplines and points in careers, and has highlighted a mixture of issues, particularly the relative importance placed on subject-specific research compared to teaching and learning activities by a variety of types of higher education institutions.

We have identified several barriers to effective reward and recognition of teaching. One major barrier is the culture embedded in institutions. Clear routes for promotion in relation to teaching and learning are increasingly evident across a range of institutions but their acceptance and implementation seems to be lacking. Effective recognition will require a change in the culture of institutions; and this will include mentoring of staff and management and support for the development of promotion panels.

This report covers four main sections, the initial part compares policy trends and developments since the previous work, the second is a focus on a set of case studies which demonstrate different perspectives of individual members of staff in different institutions. The third makes comment on criteria, their focus and development and finally a set of recommendations are made which point to current and future work in the area.

<sup>1</sup> 1. *Reward & Recognition of Teaching in Higher Education*, Higher Education Academy (2009). [http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/York/documents/ourwork/rewardandrecog/Reward\\_and\\_Recognition\\_Interim.pdf](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/York/documents/ourwork/rewardandrecog/Reward_and_Recognition_Interim.pdf)  
2. Cashmore AM & Ramsden P (2009), *Reward and Recognition in Higher Education: Institutional policies and their implementation*. Higher Education Academy [http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/York/documents/ourwork/rewardandrecog/RewardandRecognition\\_2.pdf](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/York/documents/ourwork/rewardandrecog/RewardandRecognition_2.pdf)  
3. Department for Business, Industry and Skills (2011) *Students at the Heart of the System*.



## Introduction

For a long time there has been a perception that teaching activities are undervalued in comparison to subject-specific research in UK higher education. Much anecdotal evidence existed which supported this view. Our previous reports (Higher Education Academy, 2009; Cashmore & Ramsden, 2009) gathered evidence that this was indeed the case. The first report surveyed a large number of staff in UK higher education and painted a dismal picture of perceptions of the importance of teaching and learning activities in promotion. The general perception was that teaching came a very poor second to subject-specific research activities. The second report surveyed the promotion policies of universities at that time, and also attempted to assess the extent to which these policies were being utilised. Once again this painted a patchy picture of the situation within UK higher education: relatively few institutions had well-defined criteria for assessing teaching and learning activities when considering promotion. Commonly, teaching and learning was considered of secondary importance to subject specific research, and in some institutions there were no policies to utilise teaching and learning activity in promotion criteria whatsoever. Other institutions had better developed policies, however in many cases these were not being implemented and although policy existed no teaching and learning-based promotions resulted. Although teaching activities tended to be valued less in research-intensive universities, some teaching-focused institutions also had no mechanism for promotion of staff based on teaching and learning activities. Clearly, improving the quality of teaching in higher education is now high on the agenda (Department for Business Industry and Skills, 2011; National Union of Students, 2012; Million+ Group 2012), but without appropriate recognition and reward for those involved in teaching this will be hard to achieve.

In this report we present an update of the situation and consider how the sector has progressed in relation to policies. We have also talked to staff across the sector and use case studies to illustrate how strategy and policy is actually working and impacting on the careers of individuals. We also provide a detailed background to this issue in higher education; it is essential to be aware of the wide range of studies that have previously identified problems before we can establish the impact of our evidence and attempt to provide possibilities for changing the culture.



## Background

The recent dominance of research over teaching in higher education institutions in the UK is well established (Barnett 2003; Coate *et al.* 2001; Court 1999; Rowland 2000; Association of Medical Sciences (AMS) 2010). Court points to a uniform, two-tier career structure in academia, which transcends the supposed diversity of individual preferences and disciplinary backgrounds (1999: 86). Furthermore, an AMS report (2010) suggests that, in introducing different job titles for academics with different career foci, many institutions have, even if unwittingly, established divisive structures that serve to perpetuate such a two-tier structure. These create a sense in which teaching-related jobs are seen as “career cul-de-sacs and not as part of the general continuum of academic positions” (2010: 28-29).

The issue of job security and promotion in the UK has, therefore, been primarily associated with research (Greenbank 2006: 111). The importance attached to research in the HE sector is replicated in many other countries, including the USA, Canada and Australia (Fairweather 2005; Kreber 2002; Pratt 1997; Ramsden and Martin 1996). For example, as Fairweather points out, research-related activities dominated expectations for promotion, tenure and recruitment in the late 1980s and early 1990s in the United States, and this remains the dominant ‘behavioural predictor’ of faculty pay (2005: 401-418).

The publication of the Dearing Report (NCIHE, 1997) is widely recognised as a key moment in the UK government’s long-term attempts to re-focus attention upon the nature and quality of teaching and learning in universities (Nicholls 2006: 612; Trowler *et al.* 2005: 428). The 2003 government white paper, *The Future of Higher Education*, sought to emphasise the UK government’s commitment to improving teaching in higher education and, crucially, endeavoured to begin the process of rebalancing the relative levels of reward and recognition awarded to teaching and research.

Parker’s 2008 study of HE promotion criteria in the UK suggests that most universities are now committed to moving “teaching towards a position of greater equality with research” (2008: 240). Using descriptive categories informed by the Framework Agreement for the Modernisation of Pay Structures, Parker concludes that most HE institutions do give formal parity to teaching and research in the promotion criteria for senior/principal lecturers (Parker 2008: 247). However, he suggests that this parity is not matched in higher ranks, “with fewer than half of universities taking teaching activities into account equally with research for applications to professorships and barely over a quarter for applications with readerships” (Parker 2008: 249).

However, by focusing solely on formal policy data, Parker’s study provides no clear understanding of the ways in which these policies are implemented ‘on the ground’ nor the extent to which institutional change has filtered into the everyday practices, experiences and values of academics working in universities in the UK. As Ramsden and Martin point out, there may be a huge discrepancy, “between what universities say they do to recognise good teaching, and what the majority of their academic staff perceive they do” (1996: 310). As Clegg (2008) suggests, institutional agendas relating to promotion are continually shifting and this sense of change and flux is most acutely felt in, and through, the everyday lives of academic staff. Focusing on generic institutional data alone also offers a more limited insight into the ways in which

staff perceptions and experiences vary along lines of gender, seniority, disciplinary background and the potential divisions between full and part-time staff (Archer 2008b; Harley 2003; Knight *et al.* 2007; Nicholls 2005; Ramsden and Martin 1996: 310).

The previous report drew on Young's study (2006) of 46 social policy lecturers based in institutions across the UK. His work also provides a useful context for the current work: it illustrates the extent to which some academics continue to perceive teaching as a low status/low reward activity. Young points out that the issue of reward and recognition for teaching provoked more emotion and consensus than any other interview questions. Thirty-four of the 46 interviewees said that their institution failed to adequately reward teaching (Young 2006: 193). Scepticism was also expressed about the effectiveness, and even the relevance, of promotional routes which centred upon, or included, criteria relating to teaching excellence. For example, it was suggested that academics rated excellent researchers, but average teachers, will be promoted much more quickly than those who are seen as excellent teachers but average researchers (Young 2006: 195). In some cases, interviewees suggested to Young that their teaching ability and efforts were even irrelevant when it came to gaining promotion (2006: 195).

Several studies point to the various effects of the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) in shaping the values underpinning the uneven relationship between teaching and research at universities (Greenbank 2006; Harley 2002; Henkel 2000; Lynch 2001: 192; Nicholls 2005; Oxford 2008; Parker 2008: 15; Sikes 2006; Trowler 2000: 18; Young 2006; AMS, 2010). Of central importance is the issue of funding. As Young asserts, "The attachment of funding to the assessment of research activities through the Research Assessment Exercise, but not to the assessment of teaching, through the teaching quality assessment has been a crucial factor" (2006: 197). The Association of Medical Sciences report also points out that: "RAE-based descriptions of an institution were more important to its status than teaching excellence evaluations, either those of students or outside agencies" (2010: 28). Whether through choice or compulsion (Sikes 2006), research has thus become, "the *raison d'être* of academic life" (Nicholls 2005: 612).

While academics may value a synergy between teaching and researching (Durning and Jenkins, 2005: 408), the structure of the RAE facilitates professional divisions between teachers and researchers (Sikes 2006: 562). These divisions are exacerbated by the implicit, but ongoing exclusion of pedagogical research applications within the RAE (Trowler *et al.* 2005: 440; Young 2006: 193). On these terms, the RAE has, therefore, served to further weaken the status of teaching and teaching enhancement in higher education. It remains to be seen whether the Research Excellence Framework (REF) might be perceived as enhancing or further undermining the status of teaching. The Government is aware of the status imbalance between research and teaching. David Willetts, Minister of State for Universities and Science, speaking in June 2010 said "at the moment, we have incentives for focusing on research, but nothing comparable to reward good teaching" however despite referring to our previous reports in the 2011 higher education white paper (*Students at the Heart of the System*) concrete proposals to incentivise universities to reward good teaching have yet to emerge.

Nonetheless some universities are now actively engaging in developing their recognition systems. This was evident in some of the initiatives universities were developing through one of the Higher Education Academy change programmes in 2012. The programme, which focussed on reward and recognition enhancement, supported institutions in reviewing, developing and evaluating opportunities and strategic approaches to the reward and recognition of staff involved in teaching and the support of learning.

In 2004, Skelton's sample study of 20 National Teaching Fellowship Scheme (NTFS) award winners illustrated the ambiguous role played by national initiatives in establishing the position of teaching within the higher education sector. Some award

winners from research-intensive universities considered that national recognition had actually complicated their internal institutional career profiles and status. Several award winners suggested that the award had taken them away from significant research interests and in effect represented a 'poisoned chalice.' Others spoke of feeling excluded or isolated from their peers on campus, who viewed such awards in a negative or ironic light (Skelton 2004: 461).

However Skelton also notes that in the light of NTFS recognition three award winners had been promoted to professorial level and that "in each case the award was perceived to have played an important part in this promotion" (Skelton 2004: 461). Some interviewees spoke of confidence gained and subsequent acknowledgement, by students, colleagues and their institution, especially in 'new universities' (Skelton 2004: 461). As Skelton suggests, this public measure of teaching performance and excellence may provide promotion panels with a public and therefore more 'objective' basis upon which to make decisions relating to reward and recognition (2004: 461). The Higher Education Academy's review of the NTFS in 2012 has demonstrated that institutions are indeed seeing the award of a National Teaching Fellowship as an identifiable marker of excellence and one that some institutions have embedded in their promotion policies. The findings showed that there was a shift in research-intensive institutions in terms of their strategic engagement with the NTFS as a marker of teaching excellence.

It is important to recognise that the values associated with teaching and research are embedded in a complex, diverse social field developed at an institutional, as well as sector-wide, level. Trowler *et al.* point out that the implementation, simultaneously, of a combination of formal policies may influence practice in contradictory ways and complicate strategic thinking at institutional level (2005: 440). At stake here is the ways in which different policy mechanisms and practices interact:

"To be successful nowadays, a university needs to play a number of different games. Each game has different goals and involves different rules. Some are about generating income. Others are about increasing funding through attracting greater student numbers. Some are about enhancing research, and research reputation. The goals are often incompatible, the rules are written separately, in different places by different people. And winning at one may involve compromising in others" (2005: 440).

The picture is equally complex at the micro-level of academic staff and their perceptions and experiences of working in higher education. Sikes' study of academics in a School of Education in a 'new' university demonstrates how individuals tend to value research and teaching in diverse, complex ways, and in ways that mirror their own individual and personal identities. In this vein, the values and perceptions associated with teaching and research "are not unitary, fixed or stable" (2006: 562). Similarly, Durning and Jenkins' use of focus groups illustrates how a sample of built environment academics held very different and individualised opinions, "of what was meant by linking teaching and research, and of what is meant by 'teaching' and by 'research'" (2005: 414).



## Section I - Comparing Policy Trends

### Summary of HEA/Genie CETL 2009 reports

In February and December 2009, two reports<sup>2</sup> were produced based upon research undertaken by the Higher Education Academy (HEA) and the GENIE CETL at the University of Leicester and conducted as part of a collaborative project on the reward and recognition of teaching and learning-related activities in higher education. This work sought to provide an evidence base with regard to the current state of reward and recognition for teaching in higher education in the UK. This involved the examination of both formal policies and the perceptions of academic staff.

The sets of data presented in the reports were collected using three different approaches:

First, an online questionnaire was sent to HEI staff registered on the HEA's database, containing questions concerning national and institutional learning and teaching initiatives, the importance of research, teaching and course administration in promotions within their institution (both as it is and as it should be), and the criteria used to assess teaching in higher education. The second approach used semi-structured interviews to investigate academics' perceptions of university policies, and national and local initiatives, as well as their general attitudes towards teaching as an academic activity. The third and final approach used was a survey of institutional promotion policies and data concerning their implementation, to determine how far criteria related to teaching and learning formed a significant element of institutional promotion policies. Data were collected for 104 institutions, reflecting the situation across the entire sector. Further data were collected regarding the number of promotions made on the basis of teaching-related criteria. This information was only collected on 46 of the 104 institutions, as a significant number did not hold such data or would not make it available.

The data gained via the first two approaches were presented in an interim report published in February 2009. Analysis of the data gathered via the third approach was presented in the second report, published in December 2009.

Data from both the questionnaire and interviews demonstrated that teaching and learning-related practices are, in general, perceived as important academic activities, but that they are undervalued by institutions across the sector, particularly in comparison with research. They considered, in particular, that the culture of UK higher education treats research as either more prestigious than teaching or as a safer

<sup>2</sup> 1. *Reward & Recognition of Teaching in Higher Education*, Higher Education Academy (2009). [http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/York/documents/ourwork/rewardandrecog/Reward\\_and\\_Recognition\\_Interim.pdf](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/York/documents/ourwork/rewardandrecog/Reward_and_Recognition_Interim.pdf)

2. Cashmore AM & Ramsden P (2009), *Reward and Recognition in Higher Education: Institutional policies and their implementation*. Higher Education Academy, [http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/York/documents/ourwork/rewardandrecog/RewardandRecognition\\_2.pdf](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/York/documents/ourwork/rewardandrecog/RewardandRecognition_2.pdf)

route to pursue if seeking reward, recognition and career progression. Throughout the research, promotion policies and their implementation were shown to be one of the most significant ways through which teaching can be rewarded and recognised, and, therefore, accorded equal status and esteem with research.

In sum, the two reward and recognition reports demonstrated that teaching was undervalued when compared with research, and showed that this problem is particularly acute with regard to promotion policies. On the basis of the evidence gathered, the reports concluded with recommendations for the improvement of the reward and recognition of teaching across the sector.

This third report now seeks to add to the body of evidence provided by the previous reports and, on that basis, assesses and modifies the recommendations made in 2009.

## Then and now: changes to promotion policies since 2009

### Methodological considerations

As noted, the second reward and recognition in higher education report (December 2009) examined the promotion policies of HEIs in order to establish how many included teaching and learning-related criteria. In total, data relating to 104 HEIs was gathered through both institutional websites and contact with human resources departments. For this third report, the websites of the same set of 104 institutions were searched for documents relating to promotion policies, with data being obtained from 55 out of 104 institutional websites. As before, these data were divided into four categories relating to type of institution. This sample contained 15 Russell Group universities, 15 1994 Group universities, 13 pre-1992 universities, and 12 post-92 universities.

Unlike the data collected for the 2009 report, the sample examined in this report is not broadly representative of the proportions of different types of institution present within the sector as a whole, however all types of institution are well represented. This is shown in Table I.

**Table I – Percentage of institutions in each category within the sample of 55 surveyed in this report, the sector as a whole, and the sample of 104 surveyed in the December 2009 report.**

Type of Institution	Sample of 55 (2011)	Entire Sector	Sample of 104 (2009)
Russell Group	27%	15%	18%
1994 Group	27%	14%	16%
Pre-92	24%	25%	21%
Post-92	22%	45%	45%
Independent	0%	1%	0%

In 2009 the data collected was analysed quantitatively in order to establish the level to which teaching and learning related criteria were included in institutional policies. For this third report, a similar quantitative analysis has been undertaken in order to compare the two sets of data i.e. 2009 and 2011. In addition, a qualitative analysis was also carried out which aimed to define the different forms of promotion policy used across the 55 institutions. It also endeavoured to draw out the most common and significant criteria used to assess promotion cases based around teaching excellence.

### Policies publically accessible on the internet

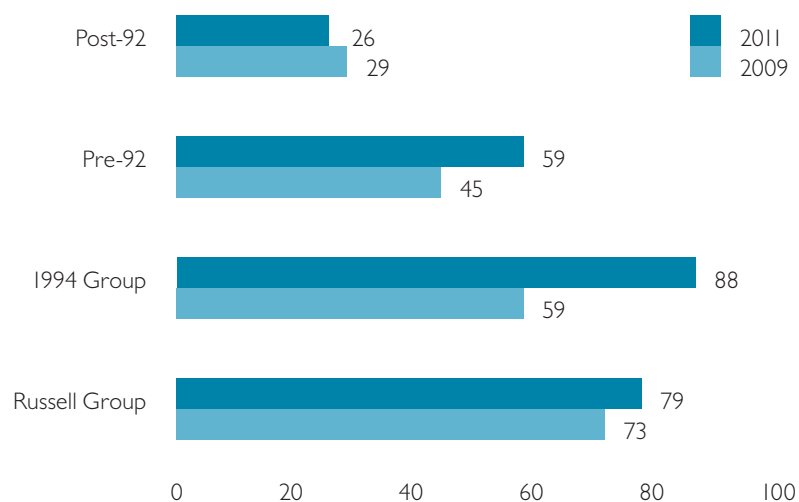
In 2009, documents which gave sufficient detail regarding promotion policies to determine the impact of teaching criteria within them were collected from 47 higher education institutional websites. During the data collection process for the current report, promotion policies were collected from 55 institutional websites, as detailed in Table 2.

**Table 2 – Number of institutions with promotion policy information on their website in 2009 and 2011.**

Type of Institution	Russell Group	1994 Group	Pre-92	Post-92	Total
2009	14	10	10	13	47
2011	15	15	13	12	55

This represents an absolute increase in the number of institutions presenting such information on their website across the sector (from 47 to 55) and, more specifically, in three of the four categories of institution. This may suggest an increased level of transparency concerning promotion policies and criteria across the sector, particularly for those types of institution with the largest increase. The number of policies published on post-92 institutional websites has marginally decreased from 13 to 12. Since the different categories of institution contain different numbers of HEIs, figure 1 helps to shed more light on the relative scale of the overall increase.

**Figure 1 – Percentage of institutions within each category with policy information on their website in 2009 and 2011.** *The figures are calculated as percentages of the total number of institutions surveyed within each category for the 2009 report.*



As the figure shows, the largest increase has occurred among 1994 Group institutions, followed by pre-1992 institutions. Indeed, a larger proportion of 1994 Group institutions have information on their website than any other category of institution, although the Russell Group universities remain strong in this area.

### Use of teaching and learning criteria in promotion policies

The December 2009 report categorised institutional promotion policies according to whether they had a significant mention of teaching and learning within them, contained explicit criteria for promotion on the basis of teaching and learning, or had no significant mention of teaching and learning. The definitions of 'significant mention' and 'explicit criteria' given in that report are outlined below:

'First, numbers of institutions where teaching and learning has a significant mention in policies. For example a policy may say 'To be successful, individuals need to show excellence in two out of the following three, research, teaching, administration'. However, precise information as to what is needed to show excellence in teaching and learning is not given. Second, numbers of institutions where specific criteria are given. In some cases this is reflected in the operation of separate tracks for research and teaching within the promotion policies. The explicit criteria are attempts at defining what is meant by excellence in teaching and learning.' (2009b:13)

The same definitions are used for this report: comparative data collected for this report and that in December 2009 is outlined in Table 3. The data is categorised according to type of institution and the year in which the data was collected (2009 or 2011).

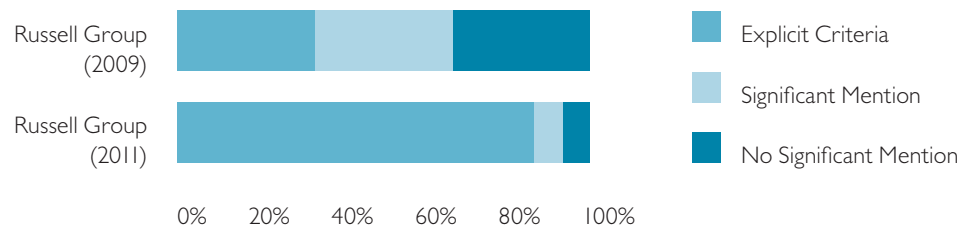
**Table 3 – The number of institutions within the sample of 55 with 'Explicit Criteria' relating to, a 'Significant Mention' of or 'No Significant Mention' of teaching and learning in their promotion policy.**

Type of Institutions	No Significant Mention	Significant Mention	Explicit Criteria
Russell Group (2009)	5	5	5
Russell Group (2011)	1	1	13
1994 Group (2009)	10	1	4
1994 Group (2011)	0	4	11
Pre-92 (2009)	1	7	5
Pre-92 (2011)	0	1	12
Post-92 (2009)	3	5	4
Post-92 (2011)	0	1	11

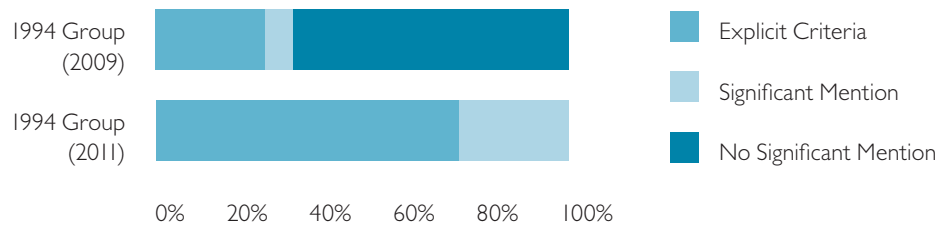
Figures 2 a, b, c, and d provide visual representations of the changing levels at which teaching and learning criteria are included in the promotion policies of each type of institution. The data is categorised according to type of institution and the year in which the data was collected (2009 or 2011).

**Figure 2 – The percentage of institutions within the sample of 55 that have ‘Explicit Criteria’ relating to, a ‘Significant Mention’ of, or ‘No Significant Mention’ of teaching and learning in their promotion policies**

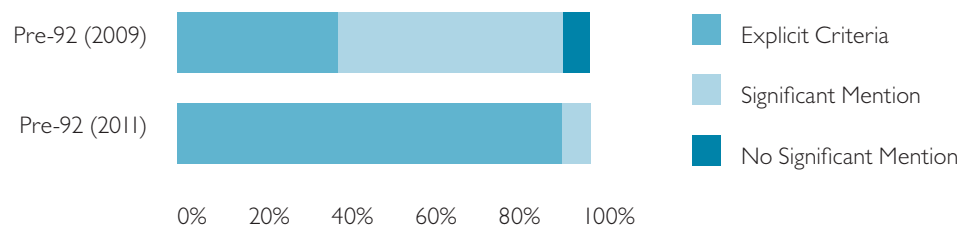
**a Russell Group Institutions**



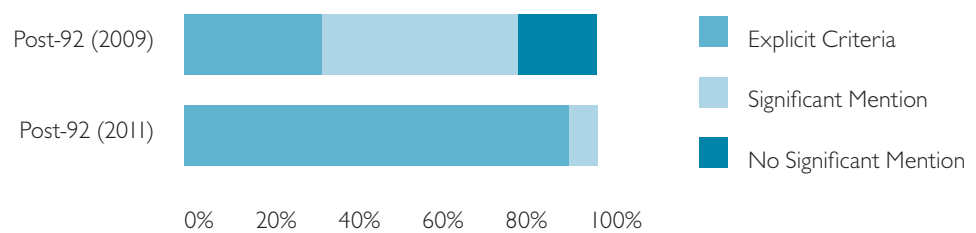
**b 1994 Group Institutions**



**c Pre-92 Institutions**



**d Post-92 Institutions**



As the figures illustrate very clearly, both in general, and in the case of each of the types of institution, the promotion policies of the 55 institutions surveyed for the current report now place greater emphasis upon teaching and learning-related criteria. The number of institutions without at least a significant mention of teaching and learning in their promotion policy has shrunk dramatically from 19 to just one, with 1994 Group, Pre-92 and Post-92 institutions all now having at least a 'significant mention'. Furthermore, it is notable that, whereas in 2009 the number of institutions with significant mentions of teaching and learning and those with explicit criteria were fairly even, the vast majority of institutions of all types now have explicit criteria in their promotion policies. This suggests that significant progress has been made with relation to the inclusion of teaching and learning in promotion policies. It is important to acknowledge, however, that these figures tell us nothing about the institutions for which data was not collected. Nevertheless, even if there has been no progress at all in those institutions, the scale of changes here can be said to constitute a noteworthy advancement.

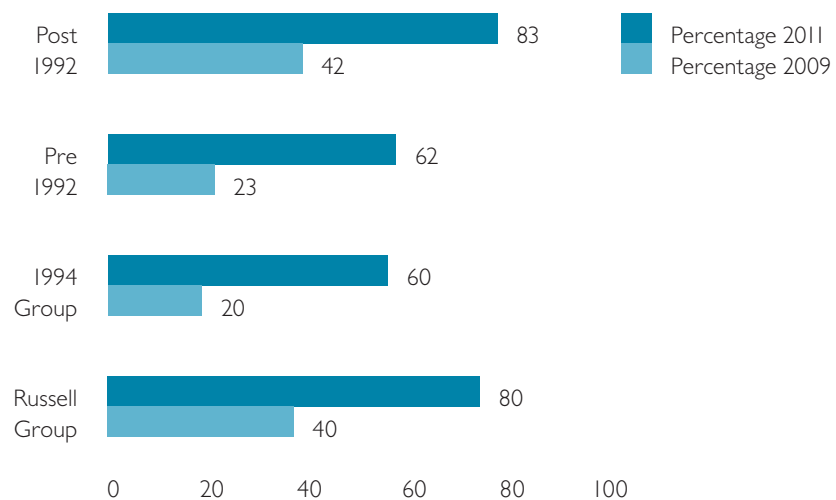
Also noteworthy is the fact that the 1994 Group institutions, which had results far worse than any other category in 2009, now have a similar profile to other types of institution. In particular, the large percentage of 1994 Group institutions without any significant mention of teaching and learning is now at zero. In fact, the only institution without even a significant mention of teaching and learning is in the Russell Group. This suggests that, in terms of reference to teaching and learning-related criteria, a significant change may have been made in the culture of the 1994 Group institutions which previously placed more emphasis on research in order to reaffirm their status as research-intensive institutions, despite not being in the Russell Group.

Although the 2009 report noted that the majority of institutions included teaching and learning within their promotion policies, it also showed that the record of those institutions was somewhat less impressive with regard to their policies for promotion to professorial levels. The 2009 report categorised institutions according to whether or not they had policies for promotion to professorial level that included the possibility that teaching and learning-related criteria could be used as a core element of an application. The data collected in 2011 have been similarly categorised. Table 4 and figure 3 compare the data from 2011 and 2009.

**Table 4 – Number of institutions within the sample of 55 with and without policies including teaching and learning-related criteria for promotion to professorial level.**  
*The data is divided by type of institution and year in which the data was collected (2009 or 2011).*

Type of Institution	Number with T&L criteria for promotion to professor	Number without T&L criteria for promotion to professor
Russell Group (2009)	6	9
Russell Group (2011)	12	3
1994 Group (2009)	3	12
1994 Group (2011)	9	6
Pre-92 (2009)	3	10
Pre-92 (2011)	8	5
Post-92 (2009)	5	7
Post-92 (2011)	10	2

**Figure 3 – Percentage of institutions within the sample of 55 that have policies for promotion to professorial level that include teaching and learning criteria.**  
*Data is displayed for each category of institution and for both years in which data was collected (2009 and 2011).*



These data show that, across all four categories, a significant amount of progress has been made with regard to policies for promotion to professorial level positions. What is notable, however, is that the relative strength of each category with regard to this question has remained stable. The Post-92 Group (closely followed by Russell Group) still has the largest percentage of institutions with relevant policies; 1994 Group institutions (closely followed by Pre-92 institutions) still have the smallest percentage.

It must be noted, however, that although these data demonstrate that progress has been made among the 55 institutions surveyed, they cannot suggest anything more than that, because it is not a properly representative sample. Most significantly, among the 43 post-92 institutions examined in the 2009 report, 74% had policies for promotion to professor that included significant teaching and learning elements. Within the 2011 sample, that level was 42%. Nevertheless, the absolute numbers show that some progress has been made, regardless of how well these trends map onto the sector as a whole.

### Structure of Promotion Pathways

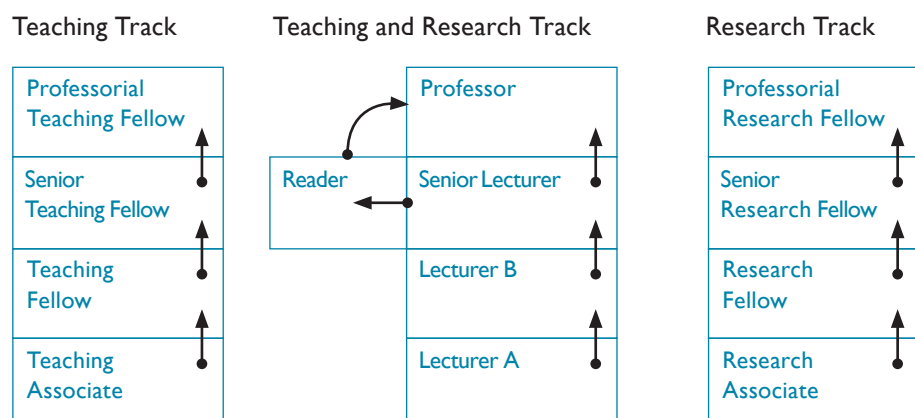
Our examination of institutional promotion policies demonstrates that there is considerable diversity across the sector. Even the introduction of teaching and learning related criteria into such policies has been handled in several different ways: while there are as many differently nuanced promotion policies as there are HEIs, it is, nevertheless possible to categorise them into three broad types, namely, three-track pathway, two-track pathway and single-track pathway, as detailed below.

#### Three-track pathway

Among the policies examined, the most common promotion structures are those that include three distinct tracks for career advancement. Often based on categories included in the 2003 National Framework Agreement on the Modernisation of Pay Structures and the related National Library of Academic Role Profiles, these promotion policies allow for academic career progression to be focused along either a research route, a teaching route (frequently referred to as 'teaching and scholarship'), or a teaching and research route.

Some policies of this type have these distinct routes for promotion all the way to the most senior levels (professorial level). Other policies contain distinct tracks that come together at a senior level (normally professor, but in a limited number of cases senior lecturer) with a single set of criteria within which teaching or research (or even enterprise or administration, which are included by some institutions) can be emphasised as part of the case for promotion. Figure 4, below, provides an illustration of such a promotion system with three separate tracks throughout.

**Figure 4 – A three-track system for promotion, with career 'teaching', 'teaching and research' and 'research' pathways that remain independent all the way to professorial level.**



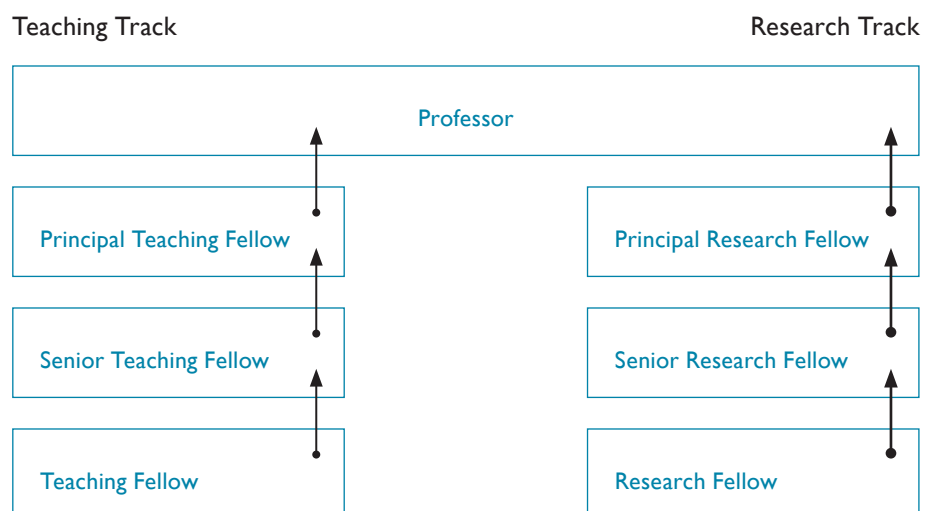
The extent to which individual academics may, as they progress through their career, move between these different tracks varies among the different policies within this type. At one end of the scale are those that explicitly lay out a number of places at which transfer is possible between the 'teaching' and 'teaching and research' tracks, and between the 'research' and 'teaching and research' tracks. At the other end of the scale are the policies in which the separate tracks are laid out with absolutely no mention of transfer between them, or a statement to the effect that such transfers can be made only in exceptional circumstances.

Additionally, various policies within this category type apply a variety of different job titles to the different grades within the promotion tracks. Some policies give different titles to positions at the same level within the different tracks. Commonly used titles are reflected in figure 4: in these cases, the conventional academic titles of 'Lecturer', 'Senior Lecturer', 'Reader' and 'Professor' are usually reserved for the intermediary 'teaching and research' pathway. In several instances, this central pathway is even referred to as the 'academic' route, as opposed to the 'teaching' and 'research' routes. In other cases the job titles are shared across different promotion routes, particularly at senior levels. Thus, a 'teaching' pathway might include the titles 'Senior Lecturer' and 'Professor' (or even 'Lecturer' as well) even though the criteria for each position have been drawn up in profiles that are separate from those of other pathways that use the same titles.

### Two-track pathway

A small number of the policies examined for this report contain structures for career progression that are based on two pathways with separate role profiles and promotion criteria for each. In some policies these pathways clearly separate research-focused positions and teaching-focused positions, while others include a 'teaching and research' track and either a 'teaching' track or a 'research' track. Where a 'teaching and research' track is included, the balance between teaching and research varies, with some flexibility allowed. In particular, where the other track is 'research', the research involved in the 'teaching and research' track can often be pedagogic. Figure 5, below, illustrates such a system in which there are separate 'teaching' and 'research' tracks, but a unified professor position.

**Figure 5 – A two-track promotion system, with separate 'teaching' and 'research' tracks, but a single professorial level role for which promotion can be obtained on the basis of either teaching or research-based criteria.**



As with the three-track pathway, some of the policies incorporate senior positions that span both tracks, allowing for promotion on the basis of a variety of criteria that span the purposes of both tracks. Thus, for example, in some cases the role of Professor is common to both tracks, with promotion being possible on primarily teaching or research-related criteria. Indeed, some policies only split into two tracks at senior levels, with, for example, Teaching Fellows and Professorial Teaching Fellows existing alongside Senior Lecturers and Professors.

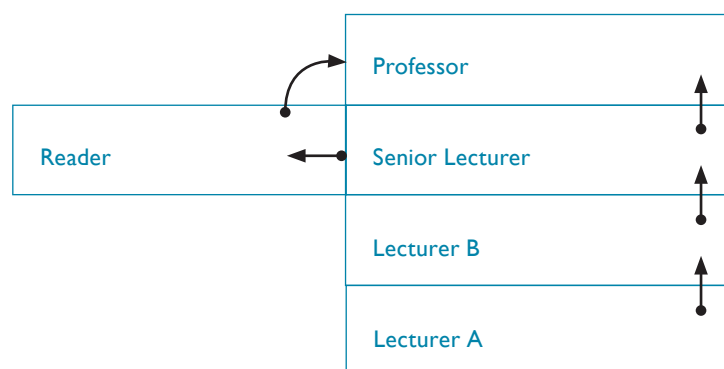
The question of job titles also arises when examining two track promotion structures. Although none of the policies considered have common job titles across both tracks, there are some differences regarding which track traditional academic job titles are attached to. In most cases, where there is a 'teaching and research' track, the titles of 'Lecturer' etc. are applied to that one. Consequently, where the other track is 'research', teaching-focused academics are able to be awarded traditional academic job titles but, where the other track is 'teaching', in general they cannot. In some cases, where there are separate 'teaching' and 'research' tracks, those titles are replaced altogether by teaching or research-specific titles.

Among the institutions with promotion policies of this type are a number of post-92 institutions, many of which have 'teaching' and 'teaching and research' tracks, since they are less research-intensive institutions.

### Single-track pathway

The final type of promotion policy, into which a significant number of the examined policies fell, involves only one track followed by all academic staff and involving some variation upon the traditional academic job titles. This track involves roles with elements of both teaching and research (as well as administration and enterprise in some cases), and promotion is typically gained on the basis of a combination of criteria relating to these elements. In most of the policies examined, this combination of criteria is sufficiently flexible to allow for academic careers with different foci. For example, promotion might be reliant on three criteria (teaching, research and enterprise) with 'sufficient' performance being necessary in two and 'outstanding' performance in the other. Figure 6 below illustrates just such a promotion system.

**Figure 6 – A single-track promotion system, within which promotion can be gained at each level on either teaching or research-based criteria, except in the case of Reader, which is usually a primarily research-based position.**



The balance that must be struck between the promotion criteria varies between both institution and position within an institution. Typically, teaching and research are the two most important criteria, with an acceptable performance in both almost always being necessary. For promotion to some senior positions, it is common for some level of excellence in research to be insisted upon. This is most frequently the case for the promotion to Reader, but, in many cases, even where promotion to Professor may be based primarily upon teaching, a significant research profile is also necessary. In some cases, it is explicitly stated that this research excellence can be in pedagogic research, but this is not always the case.

Many of the institutions with these single-track promotion policies are in the 1994 Group and may form part of the explanation for the percentage of such institutions with 'explicit criteria' relating to teaching and learning in their promotion policy remaining lower than for other types of institution. It may be that the creation of separate tracks for advancement on the basis of teaching encourages the formation of explicit criteria for the assessment of teaching. Clearly, for the purposes of this report, it is not possible to say whether such explicit criteria have, or have not, been devised for single track promotion policies.



## Section 2 - Career Case Studies

In our previous studies we surveyed 2,768 academics and as a result highlighted a considerable mismatch between academics' perceptions of the importance of teaching and learning; there being a difference between the value it is perceived learning and teaching is given compared to what it should be given. For this report we have talked with 72 academics across a range of subject areas and types of institution and obtained case studies of individual career pathways, illustrating how policies are working. Volunteers were sought randomly from those taking part in the original survey, from those attending Higher Education Academy conferences and individuals identified as running modules or programmes in their own institutions. Interviews were carried out either face-to-face or over the telephone, and transcripts of these conversations were used to produce vignettes. Names have been changed to ensure anonymity of participants. These case studies have highlighted how the status of teaching and learning, relative to that of subject-specific research, has influenced career progression.

Using evidence from both the interviews conducted for the report published in February 2009 and those conducted to produce the case studies collected for this report, it is possible to identify some key issues that underpin, and are relevant to, institutional promotion practices and the place of teaching-related criteria within them. The next section discusses such issues in relation to the three types of promotion policy described above.

### **Conflict between subject- specific research and teaching activities**

A key conclusion arising out of the two 2009 reward and recognition reports was that teaching and learning-related activities are inadequately rewarded, especially through promotional procedures. Both a number of the case studies, and a number of interviewees, suggest that it is difficult to get promotion (or, indeed, to get a job to begin with) on the basis of teaching activity. For example, one case study (1) relates Simon who has been told that he will find it difficult to progress beyond lecturer without a good subject-based research profile. Similarly, one interviewee suggested that 'promotion would not have been possible without research standing'.

### Case study 1: Lecturer - 1994 Group university

*Simon graduated with a PhD from the same 1994 Group university where he had done his first degree. Although he had enjoyed lab research during his doctorate, he had made the decision that research science was not for him and he wanted a more predictable career, so he did a PGCE with the aim of becoming a secondary school science teacher. After a couple of years teaching in a challenging inner city comprehensive, he became increasingly disenchanted with school teaching and managed to get a post-doctoral research assistant job back in the department where he had studied for his PhD. He quickly re-established himself in the lab and three years later was appointed as a lecturer in the same department. With his strong background in teaching he naturally developed interests in developing new approaches, particularly to the inclusion of key skills teaching in the undergraduate curriculum, and gradually moved away from lab-based research. This was not a problem as it was a large department with many 'research stars' although he did feel under pressure particularly when the department made its submission in the Research Assessment Exercise.*

*He has been told by his head of department that it is unlikely that he will progress beyond lecturer without a good subject-based research profile. Simon feels that he has missed the boat on this and has concentrated on his teaching. He has been at the top of the lecturer scale for several years, and despite applying for promotion based on his teaching record, twice he has not been successful. He was awarded a university teaching award a couple of years ago, and is now developing a case for an NTF, which he hopes will strengthen his case for promotion.*

This can be a particular problem for promotion systems that include only a single track with multiple criteria, or in a two-track system where the track through which promotion could be gained on the basis of teaching is 'teaching and research' with multiple criteria that can be given different weightings in different applications. In these cases, it is possible that a promotion committee will favour some combinations of criteria over others, and, for example, those with applications led by their strength in research could be favoured over those with applications led by their strength in teaching. As one interviewee, commenting on their institutional practice, pointed out:

*"There are more members of the research community on the promotions panel than lecturers so there is already an imbalance there. It gives the message that research is more important than teaching".*

Such a problem may be exacerbated when the promotion policy requires a certain level of achievement in research (even if the outstanding criteria upon which the application is based are teaching-related), but not in teaching. This could make it seem that research is given precedence over teaching, even if the specifics of the policy do not mean that that would necessarily be the case (this is highlighted by David in Case Study 2).

### Case study 2: Teaching fellow - 1994 Group university

David graduated with a PhD in physiology and then did two postdoctoral fellowships at a Russell Group university where he began to do some teaching in practical classes and tutorials. He was appointed to a three year temporary lectureship in 1980 at a pre-1992 university. During this time he began to establish subject-specific research and attracted several small grants as well as a larger research council grant. In 1983 he got an extension to the Research Council grant which paid his salary for a further year. He then moved into a research institute at the same university where he had a series of increasingly shorter contracts. In 1988 he was appointed to a senior lectureship in a post-1992 university. Although he was under pressure to establish his research this proved very difficult due to the poor infrastructure. He was appointed at the top of the senior lecturer scale due to his previous salary, but he became increasingly frustrated as there was no mechanism for promotion to principal lecturer and no vacancies at this level seemed likely. After nine years he took a post as a teaching fellow at a 1994 Group university, where he has since been awarded a university teaching award. He is now very actively researching in a variety of education fields and is enjoying innovating new programmes. A year ago he was awarded a University Teaching Fellowship for outstanding support to international students, and he is now working on developing this so he can apply for a National Teaching Fellowship. He does however find some issues regarding the different status of teaching fellows and other academic staff irksome, for example he is not automatically invited to graduation ceremonies. He has recently applied for promotion to grade 9 but was declined because of his research output. Even though he could only devote 15% of his time to this and he had published two book chapters, several reports and presented his work at many national and international conferences, the panel expected publications in high-impact peer reviewed journals.

Many participants who were attempting to combine teaching and research careers were advised not to get involved in too much teaching and to concentrate on subject-specific research if they wanted their careers to progress. An example of this is Richard, who is at an early stage of his career (Case Study 3).

### Case study 3: Lecturer in Biosciences - Russell Group university

Richard carried out a PhD at a 1994 Group university and spent seven years doing postdoctoral research in three different UK institutions. Since his PhD he has always been keen to teach, taking the opportunity to supervise project students when he could, and giving tutorials for first and second year students. He didn't get paid any extra for this but he didn't mind because he enjoyed it. In 2008 he applied for and was successful in securing a lectureship in a Russell Group university. He felt that it was a combination of his physiology research and his teaching experience that got him the job. He is completing a postgraduate certificate in higher education and he hopes that his future career will be a combination of teaching and research in his field. His mentor has advised him not to get too involved '.....in that pedagogical research business' because that would slow down his laboratory research. Richard is still determined to be involved in teaching and learning as much as he can. He knows that his lab research will help his teaching and the other way round and despite his mentor's advice he is getting as involved as he can in teaching and learning. His current teaching contact time is about 150 hours per year (this doesn't include time spent supervising project students). He doesn't feel under pressure doing this, looking at the teaching and learning literature and doing his lab work for which he has obtained a significant grant. His mentor and now his head of department are concerned and want him to lessen his work on his teaching. However, they are not pressurising him and Richard remains confident in his own abilities and the opportunities that may come up for him in his institution.

In another interview a much more experienced academic reflects on how she was advised away from teaching and it was not until she was promoted to senior lecturer (on the basis of her subject-specific research) that she felt able to devote as much effort to teaching as she would like. She eventually received a chair based largely on her teaching and learning activities but it had been a struggle, particularly earlier in her career.

Although all three of the above examples were in research-intensive universities, the picture is similar across the sector, and pressure to concentrate on subject-specific research is very common. In case study 2, David moved from a research-intensive environment to a post-1992 university, but was still expected to concentrate on subject-based research despite a heavy teaching load.

## Ceiling on promotion for teaching and learning activities

David's case (Case Study 2) illustrates two other themes running through other case studies. In the post-1992 university, and later in a 1994 Group university, he had reached a ceiling at the top of the salary scale for his grade for many years, unable to progress to the next either because there was no mechanism to do this or because of confusion in promotion panels regarding criteria to be applied to teaching and learning. His case also illustrates the lower status accorded to teaching fellows in many institutions and highlights the issue of criteria for assessment of teaching and learning activities, as well as that of training of promotion panels. The issue of a promotion ceiling is common in academics who focus on teaching rather than research. This case also illustrates a common issue of those who are forced to move between institutions to get promotion, although in David's case this has not worked yet. Another instance where promotion prospects have been capped because of the individual's focus on teaching is that of Sarah (Case Study 4).

### Case study 4: Principal Lecturer – Post-1992 university

*Sarah was appointed to her position as a senior lecturer in modern languages in a post-1992 university in 1996. A part of her remit was to set up two new modules for the first year undergraduate programme. She really enjoyed this and her other teaching to first and final year students. She also carried out a lot of work to establish a new system for pastoral care for students. Her involvement in quality assurance committee work for the university also grew and as a result of all of this, in 2005, she became a principal lecturer within the same institution. Sarah had high hopes of getting further promotion through the scale and may be even thinking about a chair position in the future. However, Sarah thinks that she is in a very difficult position and that, to some extent, her success is holding her back. She is carrying out some research into teaching approaches in modern languages, but she doesn't feel encouraged. She is not given specific time for the research and now has a high load of both teaching and administration. However, she has been told that she is unlikely to get promotion with the job that she is currently doing and advised to move if that is her aspiration. She has tried to look up the criteria for promotion in her university but has been unsuccessful. She has seen people promoted to Chair on the basis of their teaching and learning activity, usually it is clear that they are doing a lot of teaching related research, committee involvement etc. However, clear direction is not available as to the sort of things that might be needed. Sarah continues to enjoy her job and has reconciled herself to it having a ceiling in relation to career progression. She continues to work hard (usually in excess of 60 hours per week).*

Although a ceiling to promotion is sometimes explicit in institutional policy, or implicit due to failures in implementation of policies, in some cases the ceiling may be due to academics simply assuming that promotion is not possible. This is illustrated in Case Study 5.

### Case study 5: Reader in Economics - 1994 Group university

*Philip started his academic career as a teaching assistant having just completed his PhD in Economics at a Russell Group university in 1991, in this position he was able to continue with his research in the field of economics and successfully applied for a lectureship at a 1994 Group institution in 1993. On the basis of his research in the field of economics and his growing national and international reputation in the field he was appointed to reader in 2000. Philip has continued publishing in his area of economics but has also become more involved in teaching; designing and delivering new programmes both for undergraduates and postgraduates. He makes a contribution to teaching policies within his institution through committee work and is working with the Students' Union to develop more effective ways of helping students with career planning and getting help with skills such as CV writing. Philip enjoys his work very much but has accepted that by adding work in the area of teaching and learning to his job and consequently reducing his output within his economics research (although he is still publishing in high quality, international journals) he has reached the ceiling for promotion. He has been told by his head of department that he would have found a route to professor easier if he had been a senior lecturer rather than a reader, because then his teaching work could also be considered. Philip feels that his readership is stopping him having flexibility in his career path. However Philip admits that he hasn't spoken about this with other senior managers.*

Our survey of institutional policies, described in this report, suggests that many institutions have procedures for promotion based on teaching and learning activities however the data from this study also illustrate that these policies are not translating into an increase in promotion on these routes. As illustrated by David in Case Study 2 this may be because of a misunderstanding of criteria by promotion panels. In some cases switching emphasis from research to teaching during careers can cause difficulties (Case Study 5). Of course practice varies from institution to institution and some do take not only teaching but also pedagogic research into account as in the case of John (Case Study 6).

### Case study 6: Professor in Geography – Post-1992 university

*John joined a post-92 university in 1998 as a senior lecturer in Geography. From the start of his appointment he concentrated on research aimed at improving the experience of his students, by trying out new approaches and then evaluating their effectiveness. He was promoted to a position of principal lecturer (2004) and to a Chair position in (2007). His promotion was on the basis of his research but he feels that what was so enlightening was that the institution considers his research, in the field of teaching and learning, as 'real' research which, he is only too aware, isn't always the view.*

It is clear from John's case study that there is a need for bench-marking of promotion procedures and sharing of good practice across the sector.

## Status of staff in teaching-focused posts

Systems in which there is a separate teaching-based career track are faced with a related problem. Several interviewees expressed the feeling that teaching-focused career tracks and positions are treated as second-class options, which are pursued by those that have failed at research. For example, one of the interviewees said:

*We now have a career structure on our website for “university teachers”, but it is seen as a second-class thing. One of the things that can happen is that if someone is not as research active as a lecturer or senior lecturer, they’ll get moved sideways to university teacher.*

Similarly, in one of the case studies, David (Case Study 2) suggests that teaching fellows at his institution are accorded a lesser status. For example, they are not automatically invited to graduation ceremonies. Others, such as Carol (Case study 7), are employed on a significantly different basis to their colleagues involved in subject research.

### Case study 7: University Teacher – Russell Group university

*Carol had begun a promising career as a lecturer in biological sciences in a Russell Group university. She was successful in attracting research grants, published widely and was promoted to senior lecturer. She took a couple of career breaks to start a family. She returned to work part-time but found it hard to re-establish her research and found herself concentrating on teaching which she enjoyed and was good at. As her children were older, she tried to move back to full-time employment, however although she was offered a full-time post it was as a university teacher and not as a lecturer. She had little choice but to accept this change in status. More recently her university have changed her conditions of service and she is now only employed in term time, although they will pay her in vacations if she can find research funding to cover this!*

As both these case studies and the quotation suggest, this question of varying prestige for different tracks is probably more likely to occur where the job titles differ greatly for the different tracks, and one track (usually the ‘teaching and research’ track) incorporates typical academic job titles, such as ‘Lecturer’ and ‘Professor’, while the teaching track uses job titles like ‘Teaching Fellow’ and ‘Professorial Teaching Fellow’. The difference in job titles may suggest that those without traditional titles are less prestigious: this is particularly likely in those systems that call the central ‘teaching and research’ track the ‘academic’ track.

Several of the case studies highlighted problems of staff who were in teaching only or teaching fellow posts. We have already had an example of reduced status in the case of David (Case Study 2) but this is quite widespread, with poorer conditions of employment and limited prospects being common, and in some cases movement from academic to academic-related can have major effects as can be seen in Carol's experience (Case Study 7).

## Movement between institutions for career progression

Another theme which runs through many of the case studies is a sense that in order to gain promotion, moving from one institution to another is often the only way of achieving this. Case Study 8 is an example of this. Indeed, frustration with lack of career progression and a general feeling of being undervalued is common.

### Case study 8: Lecturer in Psychology – Post-1992 University.

*In 2005 Stephanie got her PhD from a post-1992 university for research in the field of the psychology of learning. Since then she has worked in the student careers service at the same institution. She felt that the institution had been very supportive in facilitating her PhD work and giving her a job! In addition to her work in careers Stephanie has also gained some experience in teaching as a tutor and occasional lecturer on one of the psychology-related courses. However, over the last two years she has applied for several jobs in the university which have been academic or directly academic-related and has been unsuccessful. She felt that these posts would build on her PhD research and the experience she has gained from working with students through student career support and through teaching. The last post for which she applied was a two year temporary lectureship in psychology and she was told that her experience with students was too.*

## Lack of career flexibility

Several of the case studies and interviews suggest that different career pathways can limit the opportunities available to individuals throughout their careers. For example, in more research-heavy career pathways the opportunity to undertake teaching-related activities may be limited, or, where such activities are undertaken by an individual on a research-heavy pathway, opportunities for advancement can be limited. This applies not just when there are distinct tracks, but also when, within a single-track, there is for example, a research-focused 'Reader' position in parallel with a 'Senior Lecturer' role. In fact, in one case study, Philip (Case Study 5) says that his potential for career progression has diminished because he is a Reader (rather than a Senior Lecturer), but wishes to focus on teaching.

Similarly, individuals on teaching-focused pathways can find that their ability to undertake research, should they wish to do so, is curtailed. In another case study, Sarah (Case Study 4) explains that she is not given the time to conduct the research she would like, having a high teaching and administration workload. Such problems can become particularly acute when, as several of the interviewees note, individuals find themselves 'moved sideways' onto a teaching-focused track when their research is deemed unsatisfactory, and they may be prevented from ever being able to work to build up a research profile again.

This problem, in which the flexibility of academic careers is reduced, reflects the core difficulty faced when separating promotion structures into separate tracks. Individuals may find themselves locked into a career with one focus without the opportunity to shift trajectory. However, some promotion policies with multiple tracks are more flexible and explicitly allow for transfer between the individual pathways at a large number of points, thereby allowing academics to adjust the focus of their careers without hampering their opportunities for advancement. They may, for example, currently be in the 'teaching' track, but, if they develop their research profiles, may then progress to a more senior position in the 'teaching and research' track.

## Scholarship and pedagogic research

In the same vein, pedagogic research does not often sit easily within any of the promotion systems. Likewise it is also difficult to assess engagement with scholarship of teaching and learning and awareness of the literature and current developments. Pedagogic research is not always considered (an entirely legitimate) part of general 'research'. For example, Richard (Case Study 3), explained that he was told not to get too involved '*...in that pedagogical research business*', similarly, in another case study, John (Case Study 6) expresses surprise that he has been promoted on the basis of pedagogic research as that is an unusual occurrence within the sector.

This is a particular problem when those most inclined to undertake such research (i.e. those focused on teaching) are moved into a separate teaching-only track. In some, although not all, cases, the duties associated with such a track simply do not allow any time for pedagogic research. The opening for pedagogic research may be through the 'teaching and research' tracks that often operate alongside 'teaching' only tracks (especially in three-track policies, although sometimes in two-track policies as well), or within single-track systems that allow for flexibility of focus in the duties assigned to any particular academic. However, in many cases it is clear that the research to be undertaken by individuals in such positions is not pedagogic, but rather disciplinary or subject-based research. Although some institutions explicitly enable academics to progress on the basis of pedagogic research, (especially if they place a heavier emphasis upon teaching in their professional activities), it remains the case that many do not. In many institutions it is considered not to be "real" research, and even when it is counted as research the differences between this and discipline-related research are not well understood by promotion panels.



## Section 3 - Criteria and Evidence for Promotion

In addition to the wide variety of promotion systems, different criteria are used within promotion policies that allow for professional advancement on the basis of excellence in teaching. Within university documentation criteria for promotion are cited for different levels from lecturer to professor; in different combinations of emphasis for instance, Teaching, Teaching and Scholarship; Teaching and Learning. And not only is the individual's role recognised but also the influence of their discipline (see for example, Cardiff University, 2012: 2).

Criteria and methods of providing evidence have been identified in previous work. In terms of method, Marshall and Pennington (2008) cited McGill University, Montreal to illustrate the effective use of teaching portfolios as evidence for tenure and promotion. The case study in their chapter notes that the teaching statement that forms the body of the portfolio, 'addresses '(1) an individual's teaching approach or philosophy, (2) their teaching responsibilities, (3) evidence of teaching effectiveness, and (4) teaching development activities' (2008:494).

Indeed, in addition to the UK, many other universities in the USA, Canada and Australia (for instance, the University of Sydney, University of Massachusetts), currently evoke the portfolio, dossier or teaching profile as an appropriate vehicle to demonstrate evidence for promotion. Support is given to candidates in their construction, Cardiff University, for instance, provides guidance on the development of a teaching profile illustrating its two part structure as: 'i. a summary of experience and ii evidence of teaching ability' (2012: 6) which, although it is more generic, aligns with McGill University's portfolio structure.

Although methods have remained relatively stable, since Marshall and Pennington's work, it is clear that promotion policies, and indeed the criteria identified, have been evolving. For instance, the case study they refer to from Northumbria University on criteria for promotion to Chair in Teaching and Learning (Pennington and Marshall 2008:488), makes reference to the use of a portfolio, but also provides the following list of aspects which evidence cited should demonstrate:

- 'The delivery of nationally recognised teaching-related professional service to other universities and organisations.
- Active involvement and/or leadership of national committees relating to learning and teaching.
- Recognition of significant adoption at national level of learning and teaching innovations originally developed by the individual.
- Keynote addresses at teaching-related conferences.
- Learning and teaching leadership across the university.
- The development of appealing and innovative programmes that have attracted significant numbers of students.

- The development of successful corporate programmes.
- The development of successful short courses.
- Leading teaching collaborations with other institutions.
- Publications on teaching and learning in refereed journals, text books and conference papers.
- A substantial number of significant learning and teaching-related grants secured on behalf of the university'.

Building on this, the Northumbria University now presents a set of criteria for Professor, Learning and Teaching, which references a much developed range of criteria on leadership and management, innovation, contribution and esteem and provides examples in support of this.

The following extract, of one criterion and the related examples, shows how the information has been developed:

Criterion: 'Strategic Academic Leadership: setting new directions, raising the profile of the School and/or University, planning and securing future resources, developing and mentoring staff and diversification of activity.

Examples:

- Exceptional leadership of innovative teaching provision/new strategies which are responsive to the emerging challenges, priorities and needs.
- Initiating and leading staff engagement with external learning and teaching agencies (e.g. HEA, subject communities, collaboration with other universities)'.

(Academic Promotions Criteria Professor - Learning and Teaching, Northumbria University, 2013).

A further illustration of the type of supportive documentation which an institution has produced can be drawn from Cardiff University: the institution provides candidates with a set of 'indicators of assessment'. These give suggestions of the types of evidence that can be cited in relation to benchmarks the institution has identified for each level and category of promotion. The indicators for learning and scholarship make reference to innovation, student and staff evaluation, impact on colleagues' practice, development of self and, as with the research indicators of assessment, those for teaching and scholarship are looking for spheres of influence.

An illustration of such an indicator of assessment for promotion to Reader and Personal Chair (Teaching and Research Pathway), is detailed in the table below:

'Benchmark Teaching and Scholarship – External to the University'	Indicators of Assessment
Evidence of significant contributions to the pedagogy of the subject area/professional practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involvement in learning and teaching at a national /international level, for example running workshops or specialist courses in universities outside the UK;</li> <li>• Conference presentations on pedagogy;</li> <li>• Contributions, e.g. publications or development of computer schemes that have shaped the way in which the subject is taught nationally, or have been adopted internationally;</li> <li>• Contribution to a professional organisation or learned society or subject area;</li> <li>• Collaboration – examples of teaching across subject and disciplinary boundaries that demonstrate a contribution to interdisciplinary / professional education;</li> <li>• External examiner experience;</li> <li>• Contributions to national or international curriculum and pedagogy debate in the subject area'</li> </ul>

(extract taken from Scheme of Assessment Promotion to Reader and Personal Chair 2012/13 (Teaching and Research Pathway), Cardiff University)

In many cases, independent evaluations from different stakeholders are expected to be drawn on to substantiate claims. Various sources are suggested such as longitudinal student feedback and peer review commentaries. In addition, other proposed evidence utilises quantitative, rather than qualitative data, for instance, 'increase in student recruitment, improved student satisfaction [rates], time-saving for staff, improved employability' (University of Manchester 2008: Annex 2). Further to this, promotion panels are looking for demonstration of an individual's impact on others' practice. By way of illustration, Oxford Brookes University's documentation notes: in the case of awarding a chair, 'in determining whether the criteria are met, the panel will look for evidence of<sup>3</sup>:

- An outstanding contribution to the learning and assessment process e.g. curriculum development, innovation in teaching, learning and assessment approaches, and *<sup>4</sup>external assessments and evaluations of this contribution;*
- A high level pedagogic research, as demonstrated by publications etc. *and how this has been received and utilised;*
- International standing e.g. membership of international committees concerned with the development of teaching of their subject in HE; international (preferably peer-reviewed) publications, contribution to international conference, *evidence of adaptation of teaching or assessment methods etc. by HEIs in other countries'. (emphasis added)*

<sup>3</sup> This is a subset of the range of evidence cited in the documentation.

<sup>4</sup> Italicised text highlights the requirement of influence on others' practice.

Looking across such institutional documentation and policies on promotion from a range of mission groups, it can be seen that the key aspects which need to be demonstrated are national and international activities, leadership, successful programme development, collaboration, publications and income generation. And as well as these general areas, some institutions include criteria which reflect institutional mission and strategy, such as promoting student access.

Considering these aspects in more detail then, the following provides a collation of the types of evidence that applications for promotion in learning and teaching might include:

- significant amounts of teaching-related activities, including lecturing, taking an active part in running modules, and supervising both undergraduate and graduate research projects;
- high quality teaching, often demonstrated through student feedback or peer review;
- high quality examination results;
- honours, prizes or awards, both at institutional and national levels;
- innovation in relation to teaching methods and materials which impacts beyond their own teaching;
- involvement in, or development of, new modules and teaching materials;
- active participation, or a leading role, in teaching-related administrative activities;
- participation in courses, training and professional development programmes;
- a national profile through, for example, contributions to national debates or acting as an external examiner;
- the impact of successful pedagogic research;
- income generation.

Nonetheless, even with such developments, it is still evident that not all these criteria and evidence sets are present in all promotion policies. For example, pedagogic research, although growing in recognition, is one aspect of teaching-related activity that is still often overlooked, or, even, purposefully ignored or dismissed.

Many of the case studies in section 2 showed how lack of defined criteria, against which an individual's performance could be considered, made it very difficult to develop good cases for promotion. However, as the 2009 reports showed, it is crucial that a consistent method is developed for assessing excellence in teaching. Without one, excellence in research, for which there is a coherent and widely-used set of criteria (based primarily on publications and grant income), will continue to remain easier to assess and, therefore, reward.

It is important for policy-makers and promotion panels to realise that since teaching encompasses a wide range of activities and roles, demonstration of excellence in these will require a range of possible types of evidence, much of which will be qualitative in nature, and this will necessarily be more difficult to assess than that of research excellence.

Certain national markers of teaching excellence are being utilised by universities as instances of evidence for promotion. Some institutions, as noted, are citing the National Teaching Fellowship in their promotion policies as evidence of national excellence. The University of Roehampton, for instance, in a document on Expectations of Academic Roles identifies sets of criteria in relation to each job category of academic staff. In Teaching and Learning Capability and Activity, one of the ways in which the category of Engagement in effective and new innovative practice, could be evidenced at professorial level is noted as 'recognition for successful innovative practice through a National Teaching Fellowship or similar award' (University of Roehampton (2013: Annex1).

Accreditation through the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF), particularly Senior and Principal Fellow also has the potential to be put forward as evidence in a claim for promotion. Indeed there is clearly some overlap between the UKPSF and the development of a flexible framework for assessing teaching excellence, which will be discussed in the next section. However, one clear difference between these two is that at least at some levels, the UKPSF sets minimum criteria for professional practice, whereas when assessing teaching excellence, panels may need to look beyond these minima.



## Section 4 - Recommendations

### Development of a flexible framework of criteria

The case studies described in this report can be used to inform the development of a flexible framework of criteria that can help institutions with identifying achievement and excellence in teaching and learning, while still acknowledging the individuality of each institution. Some institutions are already beginning to move ahead with setting such criteria but practice in the UK is variable. Comparing and sharing experiences with institutions both in the UK and in other countries will also help inform potential criteria. A framework of criteria for assessing excellence will clearly need to reflect the roles of staff at various levels of seniority and stages of their careers. These might include:

#### Lecturer/equivalent\*

- Contribution to delivering or leading teaching.
- Organisation of courses / modules.
- Student feedback / performance.
- Peer observation.
- Peer feedback/review.
- Evidence of evaluation of teaching approaches.

#### Senior Lecturer/equivalent\*

- Evidence of scholarship of teaching and learning such as awareness of relevant literature.
- Teaching informed by research (own and others').
- Writing and contributions to textbooks.
- Institutional awards.
- Own research in teaching and learning
- Input into institutional policies.

#### Chair

- Presentations and publications.
- National awards.
- Evidence of national and international impact.
- Input into national / international policy and strategy.

\* Lecturer/equivalent: includes teaching fellows, and in post-92 institutions, senior lecturers.

Senior lecturer/equivalent: includes senior teaching fellows and principal lecturers (post-92).

## Changing the culture

Setting such a flexible framework is not going to be enough to ensure change. We know that embedded cultures, valuing research above teaching practices at all levels within institutions, needs changing.

## Giving incentives and support to institutions

On top of all of this, institutions may also need incentives to actually embed change. This is clear from our institutional surveys and individual experiences. It is difficult given that HEFCE funding for teaching is basically calculated on a quantity compared to funding for research which does have a quality basis. Maybe one solution is to make transparency and consideration of promotion criteria, and their implementation, an essential component of institutional quality review. The role of the QAA could be vital here.

The funding councils have already invested in reward and recognition by supporting the work of the HEA. Work currently being undertaken includes the offering of a change programmes in 2012/13 on recognising teaching excellence, research into students' perceptions of teaching excellence as part of the HEA/NUS Student-led Teaching Awards initiative, support for the embedding of the UKPSF and the development of CPD schemes.

In addition, with support from the HEA, we are currently benchmarking examples of good practice, both within the UK and with institutions in Australia, where mentoring systems for senior management and members of promotion panels are being developed, alongside mentoring for staff seeking promotion.



## Section 5 - Conclusion

Although progress has been made since the two previous reports were published in 2009, it is clear from our new data that considerable work remains to be done. Most institutions now recognise that they need to have policies for promotion based on teaching and learning, however these policies are not yet well embedded and there is a significant lag between policy and full implementation. Clearly it will take time for new policies to have an impact on the career progression of individual academics, however it can be seen from the case studies that there are many issues yet to be fully addressed. Perhaps the two most important steps are to devise robust criteria to measure excellence in teaching and learning activities and to create a change in culture so that this excellence is valued equally alongside the more easily measurable research excellence. This is particularly important at the present time with institutions focusing on the forthcoming Research Excellence Framework exercise. Government focus on raising standards of teaching by introducing some “market forces” via student choice into the sector may focus institutions on some aspects, however this may also skew attention onto metrics, important for league tables, but may deflect from factors which will have a bigger impact on the real student experience.

A central aim of higher education institutions must be to provide high quality, inspiring teaching in order to enhance the student experience and the high level graduate outcomes to which an excellent experience leads. This report identifies the continued need for action to properly recognise teaching at institutional level, position teaching excellence at national and international levels and to enable academics to feel confident that teaching is appropriately rewarded.



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