

Academic and faculty development – strategy, implementation and impact

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Faculty development and support for academic and other staff in their teaching roles is an important topic internationally, subject to scrutiny from government, funding agencies and students, and linked to a renewed focus on teaching quality in Universities.

Many UK institutions are implementing Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Frameworks for teaching staff and setting targets for completion. In this presentation I will describe the design, development and implementation of the University of Edinburgh's CPD Framework for learning and teaching.

Key principles in the design of this framework have been to strengthen the symbiotic link between CPD and practice; to provide flexible pathways tailored to different roles, career stages and personal requirements; and integrate CPD into School (department) plans for teaching enhancement. The framework is mapped against the UK Professional Standards Framework and has been accredited by the Higher Education Academy.

The framework comprises credit-bearing and non-credit bearing options, including pathways tailored to specific areas (e.g. Clinical Education and Digital Education) and the Edinburgh Teaching Award, a route to all levels of fellowship of the Higher Education Academy. The Edinburgh Teaching Award is designed to be flexible in approach and timescale to suit the needs of staff in demanding complex roles. It allows colleagues to draw upon a range of activities (including curriculum development, pedagogic research, peer observation of teaching, leadership in teaching) alongside courses, workshops and other CPD opportunities, supported through a mentor and group meetings.

Pilots of the Edinburgh Teaching Award began during spring 2014 and all pathways are running. Reaction has been positive, and we are seeing encouraging growth in participation and completion. An external evaluation of the Edinburgh Teaching Award has been commissioned for summer 2016. One of the strengths of the Edinburgh Teaching Award is the potential to run local (disciplinary) versions as part of the University framework. This allows participants to draw on both University level events and support, alongside local courses and activities.

Essential to the success of the CPD framework is its integration with other elements of University strategy for learning and teaching, notably arrangements for academic promotions, staff engagement, a focus on developing communities of practice, and annual review. Implementation is being overseen by the University Learning & Teaching Policy Group, chaired by the Senior Vice-Principal.