

Title: **Rewarding teaching: developing the identity of Higher Education Academy Fellows**

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Abstract:

Session Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session, delegates will be able to:

- Gain a better understanding of the UKPSF and professional recognition scheme
- Engage in a dialogue about the value of teaching rewards and Fellowships
- Develop thinking on how individuals, teams and departments can be rewarded for their teaching
- Consider systematic approaches to reward teaching within institutions and beyond

Session Outline

Key issues to be addressed are:

Recent UK Governments over the last decade have promoted the importance of teaching in HE (DfES 2003, BIS 2009, 2011). Academic staff perceive teaching in UK higher education to be valued and rewarded too little, both in promotion and appointment processes and in the culture of the institution (Gibbs, 2003). There are few national systems which promote the importance of teaching at multiple stages of an academic's career. *"National initiatives in the UK are well developed compared with other countries, but institutional processes are still seen by many academics to be inadequate, despite progress in policies related to promotion and the gradual 'professionalisation of academics in their role as teachers'"* (Ramsden, 2008, 1995). Recognising and rewarding teaching is a highly topical subject and there is no one universal approach to the way teaching should be rewarded.

The Higher Education Academy (HEA) offers a professional recognition scheme for staff teaching in higher education. Recently reviewed following the launch of revised The UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) in November 2011, the scheme provides a unique opportunity for academics to gain recognition and reward for developing their capabilities as teachers and supporters of learning. There have been a number of detailed refinements and improvements based on sector feedback to the Framework following the recent consultation in 2010/11. The main changes are:

- Removal of the term Standard Descriptor – now simply Descriptors

- Minor amendments, refinements and some additional detail to Descriptors 1 and 2 to enhance their clarity and focus and to tie them in more explicitly to the Dimensions of Practice
- Descriptor 3 revised to clarify purpose and focus
- New Descriptor 4 introduced to encompass wider and deeper strategic roles within teaching and supporting learning context.

Two key changes have been revisions to Descriptor 3 and the addition of Descriptor 4. These two correspond to the categories of Senior Fellow and Principal Fellow respectively.

The immediate benefits of these changes will be measured and disseminated via the outcomes from commissioned work to measure the impact of the UKPSF for teaching and supporting learning. We hope to be in a position to share these outcomes in Spring 2013.

Some of the key successes of the UKPSF to date include:

- development and operation of institutional CPD Frameworks to enhance learning and teaching
- engagement with accreditation services that provide opportunities for staff to demonstrate their professionalism against the UKPSF at different points in their career
- this academic year alone, over 5000 individuals have been recognised as Associate Fellows, Fellows, Senior Fellows or Principal Fellows which demonstrates a valuable indicator of professional identity for those engaged with HE teaching and learning

The professional recognition scheme provides an indicator of professional identity for HE practitioners at whatever point they are in their careers and uses a combination of methods via accredited provision and individual experience that are deemed fit for purpose, manageable and relevant to the context and purpose of the award.

In light of the revised UKPSF, we aim to explore some of the questions and issues currently being asked about the meaning of Fellowships and its value. We will address questions around the interpretation and engagement of Fellowships both conceptually and practically using evidence from those who have taken part in the professional recognition scheme. We will reflect on the approaches of the Higher Education Academy in how it recognises and rewards teaching with a view to sharing practice across institutions in how they reward and recognise teaching and encourage future development in this area.

Session Activities and Approximate Timings

0-5 mins – introductions, overview of session.

5-15 mins – presenters reflect on HEA practice to reward teaching, UKPSF and Professional Recognition scheme.

15-30 mins – engaging group/table discussion on the value of rewarding teaching. Develop a rich picture of schemes that reward teaching from different perspectives, e.g. University, FE College, private provider.

30-40 - Feedback from tables. Opportunity for delegates to share key points which would be useful for others to be aware of – facilitators to capture and highlight commonalities and differences in the ways teaching is recognised and rewarded.

40-45 – Presenters summary and where next – an opportunity for delegates to consider how they might want to engage further with the UKPSF themselves and/or seek HEA recognition.

References

BIS, (2009), *Higher Ambitions: The future of universities in a knowledge of economy*

DfES, (2003), *The Future of Higher Education* (London HMSO)

Gibbs, G. and Habeshaw, T. (2003), *Recognising and Rewarding Excellent Teaching* (Open University, Milton Keynes)

Ramsden, P (2008), *The future of Higher Education, Teaching and the Student Experience*, The Higher Education Academy, United Kingdom.

Ramsden, P. et al (1995), *Recognising and Rewarding Good Teaching in Australian Higher Education* (Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra)