With the support of the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Union

„Identifying Barriers in Promoting the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance at Institutional Level“

IBAR

Agreement number – 2010 – 4663/001 - 001

WP10

Quality and Teaching Staff

National study – United Kingdom

2012

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

IBAR Project
Work-Package 10

Quality and Academic Staff – survey of institutions UK

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Introduction

This report presents data from four UK higher education institutions, three from England and one from Scotland, about the management of their internal quality assurance systems as they relate to the quality of academic in higher education. The report was produced between September and November 2012 by the IBAR project team at the University of Strathclyde and Durham University

The report focuses on the policy and procedures for assessing and enhancing the quality of academic staff involved in teachingin UK higher education. It draws on data from four UK institutions and also examines the broader higher education policy and national quality management environment that influences institutional practice in this area.

This report will form part of the data informing a synthesis report for this work-package of the IBAR project that will make recommendations about future guidelines onthe quality of academic staff and opportunities for enhancement in the context of the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area Part 1 (ESG1).

Currently, ESG1 includes the following standard and guidelines relevant to the quality of academic staff:

> **1.4 Quality assurance of teaching staff**
>
> Standard:
> Institutions should have ways of satisfying themselves that staff involved with the teaching of studentsare qualified and competent to do so. They should be available to those undertaking external reviews, andcommented upon in reports.
>
> Guidelines:
> Teachers are the single most important learning resource available to most students. It is important thatthose who teach have a full knowledge and understanding of the subject they are teaching, have thenecessary skills and experience to transmit their knowledge and understanding effectively to students ina range of teaching contexts, and can access feedback on their own performance. Institutions shouldensure that their staff recruitment and appointment procedures include a means of making certain that allnew staff have at least the minimum necessary level of competence. Teaching staff should be givenopportunities to develop and extend their teaching capacity and should be encouraged to value theirskills. Institutions should provide poor teachers with opportunities to improve their skills to an acceptablelevel and should have the means to remove them from their teaching duties if they continue to be demonstrablyineffective.

1. National policy context

Introduction

Many professions in the UK are highly regulated but university teaching is not currently one of them. Professional regulations normally cover matters such as entry qualifications, initial training, continuing development and codes of behaviour. By comparison it can appear as if university teaching has been treated as a special profession, (McInnis 2010).

That does not mean university teachers have been protected from changes in the ways academics are inducted, developed or evaluated or to the roles they are expected to undertake. Over the past two decades the nature of academic life and the specifics of the academic role has changed significantly.

In the 1960s, 70s and 80s there was a binary higher education system in the UK including both universities and polytechnics/colleges. Many of the latter had origins in further education, which had different traditions in terms of staff qualifications, roles, training and development from the university sector. With the removal of the binary divide as a result of the Higher and Further Education Act 1992, there has been substantial convergence across the expanded university sector, but new complexity is added because a significant amount of provision occurs in further education institutions (what is termed "HE in FE") in partnership with university providers.

Over the past thirty years there has also been considerable growth in the number of professional subject programmes within the higher education sector. A correlate has been recruitment of many staff thatarethemselves members of regulated professions (for example physiotherapy, radiology, nursing). So the scene is now a complex one which may explain some of the objections to "one size fits all" developmental frameworks for academic staff.

Kogan et al (1994) suggested that the traditional developmental model for academics, via the gaining of a PhD, needed to be revisited. Even then it was apparent that many academics did not have a PhD. More recently, staffing patterns have become more diverse with an increase in part time posts and the emergence of different pathways and timelines for academic roles (for example, teaching or research-only positions) and newer "third space" professionals who perform multi-disciplinary roles (Whitchurch 2009).

In the UK, higher education institutions are the legal employers of their staff. Thus they decide on qualifications and training, although government can influence that in various ways. The freedom of institutions is also constrained both by employment law and current views on good practice such as the UK Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) Codes of Practice.

In the late 1960s, during a time of student unrest in the UK, a committee examined university teaching. It identified strengths in various approaches such as lectures, tutorials and laboratory classes and also recommended that new academics receive an induction into university teaching. These recommendations aligned with another

significant change: the introduction in the early 1970s of a system of probation for initial academic appointment. That system was negotiated with the relevant staff union, the Association of University Teachers. Academics on probation normally had up to three years to demonstrate that they had reached the standard for their position to be confirmed. That meant institutions had to put in place procedures to handle probation including goal setting, performance evaluation and reporting and ways of advising and supporting staff.

Many institutions offered short courses, which introduced new staff to aspects of the teaching load. In part these were "tricks and tips" based but progressively they sought to engender reflective practice. These courses were led by recently-formed educational development units, often supported by experienced staff. In the mid 1970s an informal collaborative grouping, the Coordinated Committee for the Training of University Teachers concluded that the validity of such courses was influenced by visible local AUT support (Main 1985). Thereafter such arrangements grew and extended to embrace other early career groups such as PhD students and to offer support to more experienced academics seeking to change their pedagogical approach.

Within subject disciplines, developmental support also expanded through dedicated journals in the subject discipline and through the emergence of special interest groups within the relevant subject association. That said, the position was patchy and driven by enthusiasts. Many academics had little knowledge of these activities, a feature that, in large measure, continued to affect the UK-wide Learning and Teaching Subject Centres when they came into being in the 1990s.

Around that time the Staff and Educational Development Association introduced a voluntary route for accrediting university teacher development. The scheme covered activities, knowledge and values. In the late 1990s,a broadly similar framework was adopted by the Institute for Learning and Teaching (ILT) and its successor the Higher Education Academy (www.heacademy.ac.uk).

The ILT arose directly from recommendations of the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education (Dearing 1997). The ILT scheme centred on the definition of what was required to become a Fellow. That framework fostered the growth of sustained professional development programmes for university teachers, often pitched at post-graduate level. Observation of teaching was not required although many programmes did include it (for example, through paired peer critiquing).

Earlier in the 1990s new UK procedures of quality assurance and quality assessment introduced expectations about the initial induction of academics to their teaching roles, and asked questions of how poor teaching was identified and rectified and how innovative teaching was encouraged and supported.

These trends encouraged substantial growth of educational development centres in UK HEIs as Gosling (2008) has documented. There were also questions raised about appropriate levels of resources and the location of the support, and whether participation was expected or required as part of probation.

The HEA scheme defines requirements for various levels of recognition e.g. Associate Fellow, Fellow etc. which have been incorporated into a national professional standards framework (UKPSF). The framework sought to address an expectation in the 2003 White Paper (The Future of Higher Education).

Recently, institutions in England and Wales have been required to return the percentage of academics having satisfied the relevant HEA standard/UKPSF level as one item in the Key Information Statistics (KIS) set collected by HESA, the Higher Education Statistics Agency. Informal discussions suggest that institutions are setting different benchmark targets and dates for attainment. In part, that may reflect ongoing debate about the topic, but it is also influenced by pressures in the system. Apart from workload stresses due to financial stringencies there is the powerful influence of desired research performance with the forthcoming REF focusing discussions over priorities. Another trend is that some institutions are giving new academics (especially in the Life Sciences) three to five years to concentrate on establishing their research programme. Often the related teaching load consists primarily of supervising undergraduate dissertations and postgraduate theses. This tends to lead to an argument that initial training for these individuals should be narrowly focused on the teaching tasks they undertake with any wider induction deferred till later.

Evaluating Teaching

Opinions are divided on the most appropriate way to evaluate university teaching. Increasingly heavy reliance is placed upon student questionnaires. Provided the sample is large, the design thoughtful and the methodology robust they are a relevant source of information. However in the modern era they can easily shift towards consumer satisfaction surveys rather than accessing views on impact upon student learning. Ideally the search for measures of effectiveness should involve an element of triangulation e.g. views from students, from academic peers and evidence from student work. Given the basic tenet in current thinking on quality in higher education it seems logical to suggest that the prime interest should be the impact on student learning. Although that is a multi-stranded topic it is none the less perfectly capable of exploration.

Another line of enquiry could entail commitment to student learning, self-reflection and evidence of continuing development in relation to teaching and learning. All UK HEIs have schemes, which seem to access these items although it is questionable if they have gained universal academic support.

Beyond activities mentioned above many other developments have influenced the evolution of the topic in the UK in the past forty years. These include national and local funding initiatives, the blossoming of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL), changes to promotion criteria to reward excellence in teaching and the impact of external indicators such as institutional rankings and quality assurance reports.

2. Methodology

Institutions surveyed

The four institutions selected represent a sample of the variant types of higher education institution in the UK. After the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act, polytechnics in the UK achieved degree-awarding status and became universities. Our sample was selected to demonstrate the diversity of higher education in the UK and to ensure that the data collected offered a rich picture of practice across the sector.

Our sample includes:

University A is a research-intensive, collegiate institution, which dates from the early 19th century. The University has around 11000 undergraduate and 5000 postgraduate students and its main functions are divided between academic departments, which undertake research and provide teaching to students, and a number of colleges, which are responsible for the domestic and pastoral needs of students, researchers and some academic staff. University A features prominently in UK and QS university rankings and is a member of British and international groupings of research-intensive universities. It is consistently rated as one of the top universities in the UK.

University B was a former polytechnic that opted to become a university under the powers of the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act. Subsequent mergers with colleges in the region added Nursing and Midwifery to the academic profile and three smaller campuses. The University has around 16000 students spread across five campuses. It also offers foundation awards in conjunction with partner further education colleges. Some 5000 students study in Europe and Asia for University B awards. There is a strong commitment to employment-related provision.

University C dates from the late nineteenth century. It became an independent institution in the 1960s. Further academic diversification occurred through growth and, in the 1990s, via merger with higher education colleges. Currently it has some 17000 students and a strong professional orientation. Distance learning students account for almost 20 per cent of the student enrolment.University C has some world-renowned areas of research excellence and has a growing reputation for the quality of its student education.

University D is one of the newer universities in the UK, progressing from the status of a higher education college, to that of a University College and then full university status in recent decades. Mergers during that phase also diversified the academic profile. It has around 8000 undergraduate students, of which 1300 are studying for further education qualifications. Almost half of the student population comprises mature students.

Conducting the research

Data collection for WP10was conducted in four ways: firstly, as a desk study, using documents publicly available on the websites of the four institutions to uncover policies and information about institutional activities related to the assessment, evaluation and enhancement of the quality of academic staff. During this first phase of data collection, a number of key individuals at each institution with particular responsibility for/or interest in staff recruitment, educational support and the development and implementation of were learning and teaching strategies were identified. These included senior managers at institutional level (for example, Vice-Principals or Pro-Vice Chancellors of Learning and Teaching, Directors of Quality); senior academics with responsibility for overseeing decision-making processes at School/Faculty level (for example, Deans of Faculty, School Directors of Quality); academic support staff with responsibility for staff quality (Directors of Staff Development Services or their equivalents); support staff with responsibility for contributing to recruitment and progression criteria (senior staff in Human Resource departments or equivalent); and students (in particular Student Presidents and sabbatical officers of the Students Union or members of the Student Council). In all, 64 university representatives were approached to participate in this study, 16 from each institution.

A second phase of data collection involved the distribution of a short questionnaire to the aforementioned categories of respondents in each institution.

The third phase of data collection comprised focus groups and semi-structured telephone interviews with those individuals identified in phase one of the data collectionthat were available to speak to the team.

A final phase of data collection comprised desk-based data collection to inform a consideration of the sectoral and/or national policy context of stakeholder engagement in higher education in the UK.

3. Responses to the research questions

1. What is the institutional policy on assuring the quality of teaching staff? How are institutional rules or procedures related to national rules or guidelines concerning the quality of staff involved in teaching?

The UK Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA)'s Code of Practice (Section B3) adopted in 2012 includes the following indicator and definition of institutional responsibility for effective teaching:

> **Higher education providers assure themselves that everyone involved in teaching or supporting student learning is appropriately qualified, supportedand developed.**
> Effective student learning is facilitated by interaction with appropriately qualified,supported and developed teaching and support staff. Staff may be employed bythe degree-awarding body, by a collaborative partner, a work-

based learning orplacement provider, or may be a member of visiting staff; where responsibility sitsfor staff appointment, support and development is defined by the terms of therelevant collaborative arrangement.

UK institutions are responsible for decision-making about the recruitment, development and evaluation of academic staff and are the independent legal entities that enter into contractual relationships with individual academic staff. In all of the institutions surveyed, a number of policies determine different procedures and principles that influence practice at different stages of the employment lifecycle. In general, three areas of intersecting practice influence the quality of academic staff with responsibility for teaching:

- Institution-wide or local (School/Faculty/Department) learning and teaching strategies or other strategic priorities which inform recruitment and development activities
- Recruitment and human resource policies, including reference to national employment law
- Staff development and enhancement activities, including some aspects of promotion or reward mechanisms, including reference to national frameworks

At institutional level, university mission or strategic priorities determine the university's orientation towards teaching as a core element of practice. Of the four universities participating in this study, two describe themselves as "research-led" institutions, two as "teaching-led". This division across UK universities broadly replicates the former binary division between universities and polytechnics and indeed in this case, the two universities that describe themselves as "teaching-led" are new institutions created after the 1992 UK Higher and Further Education Act.

Institutions like University B, which describe themselves as "teaching-led" are most likely to be those which have relatively high proportions of students from low socio-economic backgrounds, a focus on applied or professional award programmes and to gain the majority of funding from taught programmes rather than research activities (although research, particularly in partnership with industry, is very likely to be a significant part of university activities). At University B, the new institutional strategy, adopted in October 2012 for the period 2012-2017, states that:

> "[We should be] an excellentteaching-led university that, through the commitment and engagement of our staff, justifiesthe investment that students and others make byengaging with us…. We are a people business. Our staff have thefundamental role to play in the effective delivery ofour high quality services to students and customers,wherever they may be. Our professional, engaged,committed and diverse staff will be central indifferentiating us from our competitors and drivingthe University forwards".

For institutions like University A and University C, which describe themselves as "research-led", but which also have a strong historical commitment to students from non-traditional learner backgrounds and from the local area, institutional mission foregrounds both research and teaching as core areas of competence or "excellence". At University A, the strategic approach is to explicitly link teaching and research. The university's strategy states that:"Research-led education derives its unique value

from the academic community of practice in which it is based. The University's community consists of academics, students and professionals whose activities are based on shared knowledge and investigative skills derived from research." All disciplines at University A are expected to expose students to research, in a way that is informed by pedagogical scholarship, and which will educate students in investigative skills that prepare them for their future; and give students the opportunity to engage in research and enquiry themselves -to become 'research-minded'.

Senior managers at University C explained that their strategic ambition (to be recognised as one of the top 200 institutions worldwide) can't be achieved solely through high performance in research. As one senior manager noted: "if you look at the world's top universities, it's not just research, but also graduate outputs." Another senior member of staff explained: "It is 'mission critical' to get staff who are good teachers to get a good student experience… students are why we are here and we need to have that ethos".

Universities B, C and D are all at the beginning of a new planning cycle and have all adopted new strategic plans in 2012 that foreground explicit commitments to staff development and reward for contribution to teaching excellence. A number of senior managers noted that the language of institutional strategic plans during this planning cycle is somewhat different from those of five years ago, which tended to focus more exclusively on the student experience without making explicit reference to the role of staff as the progenitors and deliverers of quality in student learning. For example, University C's new Learning and Teaching Enabling Strategy, which sets out the institution's plans for learning and teaching for 2012-2015 comprises five main aims, of which the third aim is explicitly related to teaching quality. This aim states that:

> "We recognise and reward our academic excellence in learning and teaching publicly and through promotion".

Two sub-aims under this heading describe two main strands of activity: Firstly, the development of a staff professional learning and development framework and, secondly, development of university procedures for the reward and promotional recognition of excellence in teaching and for excellence in the management of programmes and teaching teams.

The Higher Education Academy UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) is recognised as a key external benchmark for internal staff development practice and the requirement to publish staff attainment against the UKPSF in the KIS dataset collected by HESA (for institutions in England and Wales) was described as an important strategic driver by a majority of staff participating in this study. The other core national reference point is the QAA Code of Practice. Most participants also described the importance of demonstrating teaching quality in an increasingly competitive higher education "market" in which institutions are competing to attract the best students.

2. What criteria are used during staff recruitment and appointment procedures to determine teaching experience or teaching quality? What works well, what challenges does the university face?

The UK Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA)'s Code of Practice (Section B3) adopted in 2012 includes the following indicator and definition of institutional responsibility for selection of staff involved in teaching:

> Higher education providers determine what is necessary to demonstrate that a member of staff is qualified to fulfil their role in teaching or supporting learning;whether this means the individual holds a relevant formal qualification will depend onthe circumstances. Staff recruitment and appointment procedures include a meansof ensuring new staff have an appropriate level of competence for the teaching and/or learning support role to which they are being appointed. In particular the providerconsiders the extent to which members of staff have:
>
> - appropriate and current practitioner knowledge and an understanding of thesubject they teach (which may be demonstrated by a qualification) and anunderstanding of the disciplinary scholarship appropriate to the academic levelof the students they are teaching
>
> - the necessary skills and experience to facilitate learning in the students theyare interacting with, and to use approaches grounded in sound learning andteaching scholarship and practice.

Data from this study suggests that considerable variation in practice in recruitment is evident across UK universities and within Faculties/Schools/Departments. However, universities that describe themselves as "research-led" appear less likely to include an evaluation of teaching performance as part of local recruitment activities.

At University A, definitive rules about what level of qualification or experience is appropriate. An individuals' prior teaching experience is considered to be important but recruitment material does not specify a particular set of qualifications or level of past experience. Some respondents very much felt that recruitment of academic staff was very heavily biased towards the research profile of the candidates:

> "My sense is that academic appointments are increasingly driven by the research agenda. When I worked within a Faculty the Dean used to say when an appointment comes up you're looking to choose someone to meet your teaching commitments but what you should be looking for is someone who would help you further your research agenda".

Similarly, at University C, managers at Faculty/Department level described the "mis-match" between recruitment priorities and the university's new strategic plan. New academic staff are much more likely to be recruited on the basis of research performance than teaching ability. One member of staff responsible for recruitment of staff at Faculty level noted:

> "The trend over the past five years has been employing people with a good research record – getting grants and writing publications. We had to respond to a university directive asking us to do that. I've never seen a directive that tells us that we have to hire top-flight teachers."

Participants noted the difficulty in relying on past research performance to determine not only future teaching performance, but also future research performance: "we are hiring these 3 and 4 star researchers and now realising that they are not performing at that level and aren't necessarily great teachers either".

At University B and University D, both institutions that describe themselves as "teaching-led", recruitment is much more likely to include a consideration of past teaching experience (if any) and activities that help panels to assess teaching ability and/or potential. Typically, candidates are asked to "teach" in a mock classroom environment, often to a group of subject experts and (in some cases) students. At University B, a member of senior staff responsible for School/Faculty appointments explained:

> "It's a teaching session of around 20 minutes… it's showing that you know how to engage with people, prepare slides, bring out important points and that you are not boring! If you can't teach, you can't do the job. Lots of people know their subject, but not all of them can teach it well."

A number of participants in this study acknowledged that an evaluation of classroom technique assesses only one dimension of effective teaching practice and mechanisms for evaluating other activities are hardly ever used and may be poorly understood. One participant noted:

> "We test whether they can stand up in front of students, but we don't ask about whether they can design a good module or whether they know how to give good feedback".

Many participants acknowledged that institutional arrangements for staff development as part of probation are designed to "smooth out" deficiencies in teaching practice and therefore recruitment processes are designed with the implicit assumption that any problems will be dealt with during compulsory training. In University B and University D quite a large proportion of staff members in some Schools/Faculties are recruited from industry backgrounds. Participation in staff development activities as part of probation requirements is seen as key to developing the potential quality these staff members as teachers.

Human Resources staff participating in this study noted that recruitment and selection of high quality staff is just one part of supporting competitive advantage for universities in terms of teaching quality: "It is also about the development of existing staff and acceptance of new processes and systems to underpin this" (HR professional at University B).

3. How does the university support the enhancement of teaching quality? What works well, what challenges does the university face?

The UK Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA)'s Code of Practice (Section B3) adopted in 2012 includes the following indicator and definition of institutional responsibility for enhancement of teaching quality:

> Members of staff new to their teaching or supporting student learning role areencouraged to engage in appropriate induction and mentoring opportunities madeavailable by the higher education provider. Once appointed, and throughout their career, staff engage with opportunities todevelop and extend their teaching capabilities and to reflect upon their teachingpractice. Staff are encouraged to value their own and others' skills, to recognise thatthey have a responsibility to identify their own development needs, and to engage ininitial and continuing professional development activities
>
> Higher education providers make opportunities available for all those involved in teaching and supporting studentlearning to inform each other's practice and professional development.Continuing professional development activities made available by the higher educationprovider are planned strategically, including the allocation of sufficient resources tocover the needs of both research and learning and teaching development. Protectedstaff time to engage in continuing professional development is identified and factoredinto workload considerations.
>
> Higher education providers assure themselves of the effectiveness of their approachto staff development and support. Aspects considered may include any or all ofthe following: working with staff development teams; having online continuingprofessional development resources and modules for staff; and ensuring the availabilityof sufficient administrative support. Higher education providers also have agreed procedures to identify staff in need ofadditional support to ensure their effectiveness, and provide them with opportunities(which the provider expects them to take up), support and mentoring to enableimprovement of their skills and competency to an agreed level.

The institutions participating in this study commonly demonstrate strategic commitments to staff development activities (and, in the light of the requirement to publish data on staff achievement against the UKPSF, commitment to specific targets on staff attainment). For example, University B's strategic plan for 2012-2017 contains the following statement about targets for staff development:

> Within the overall framework of this strategy, which explicitly relates staff quality to market differentiation and competitive advantage, the following targets for staff have been identified:
>
> - All members of staff to engage in at least onepedagogic professional development activity per year -pedagogic for academic staff and profession relatedor professional support staff

- All new substantive learning and teaching staff to havegained the PgCHPE (Postgraduate Certificate in Higherand Professional Education) or equivalent within thefirst two years of employment
- All existing learning and teaching staff to beencouraged and supported to attain Fellowship of theHigher Education Academy and/or the PgCHPE
- A further five National Teaching Fellows to have beenrecognised by 2017
- Achieve a consistent increase in the numbers of staffengaged in curriculum related research (broadlydefined), enterprise and advanced scholarship towards100% participation by academic staff over the planningperiod

At University B, in common with the other institutions in this study, all new staff involved in teaching are required to complete a probationary period that includes compulsory participation in training/professional development courses leading to an accredited qualification in higher education teaching (usually a Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching in Higher Education or similar). Typically, specialist educational development units within the university provide these courses. Other probation activities offered at University B and at the other institutions in this study include participation in mentoring schemes and peer review of teaching.

Before any new staff members are allowed to teach students, they are typically required to participate in short courses lasting two or three days that introduce basic skills and concepts. These induction courses are usually offered before the start of the academic year in September and in some institutions before the start of the new term or semester in January. Participants in this study reported logistical challenges associated with running these short courses, with high cost of input, but they are also perceived as an important component in managing risks associated with inexperienced teachers prior to completion of probation.

In recent years, UK institutions have increasingly sought to accredit their internal staff development activities through the HEA, and this has become more important now that attainment against the HEA UKPSF is part of the public dataset submitted by universities to HESA. At University C, for example, compulsory completion of the 20 credit module *Learning, Teaching & Assessing in HE c*onfers eligibility to become an Associate of the Higher Education Academy. Successful completion of the full PG CertTHE confers eligibility to become a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy.

Senior staff, including educational development directors and managers, participating in this study commented on some of the strengths and weaknesses of staff development programmes, including those accredited by HEA. There is some evidence that the HEA requirements can be perceived as rather basic: “it’s a bit empty, a bit ‘motherhood and apple pie’ and we want to do something a bit more ambitious”. Some participants expressed concern that the distinctiveness of local programmes could be lost if HEA/UKPSF attainment becomes the only recognised standard.

A number of staff participating in development programmes noted that the level of support given to individual staff members undertaking the programme by their departments is varied. For example, a participant at University A reported that:

> "when I was doing my PGCert people referred to it as that irritating thing you need to do for probation - or would tell me not to worry about it just get through it".

This study also uncovered perennial differences of opinion about the status and content of staff development programmes. For some participants, the academic nature of existing programmes (which are credit-bearing and lead to accredited qualifications) lends valuable credibility and weight to these activities. Some senior managers expressed the view that internal staff development should be applied, and practitioner-based rather than encourage staff towards scholarship in pedagogy. The "shibboleth" of reflective practice, which has become an almost universally normalised phrase to describe the intended outcome of staff development has, for some participants become "meaningless in its ubiquity". A senior manager commented:

> "What is the purpose of staff development in higher education? Is it to make people do research in pedagogy or is it to help people teach well in the classroom?"

Staff involved in delivering educational development programmes tended to argue that knowledge of pedagogy in fact helps their academic colleagues to teach well. Reverting to a "tips and tricks" model of staff training devalues both the processand the outcome. This dilemma continues throughout the staff life cycle: what kind of continuing professional development is achievable, appropriate and valuable to staff involved in teaching? Regardless of their orientation towards staff development, participants in this study almost universally agreed that engagement with CPD is too low. There is little consensus on what kinds of CPD should be offered, what should be compulsory and what can be done to encourage engagement, beyond setting minimal targets for participation.

A related challenge is how to encourage existing staff to engage with accreditation against the UKPSF. At University B, a pilot scheme run in partnership with the HEA allows staff to gain accreditation by portfolio: that is, collecting and reflecting on evidence from previous and current teaching experiences. Evidence is collected using the same online e-portfolio system as that offered to students. This pilot scheme is currently being coordinated at institution level, but the aim is to create a critical mass of qualified and experienced teachers who together constitute a local academy of teaching expertise within Schools/Faculties and can themselves in turn mentor other staff members.

Both senior managers and students participating in this study identified another significant challenge in staff development: that is, provision of development for staff who have contact with students or responsibility for teaching, but who are not lecturers. The QAA Code of Practice is clear that the term 'staff' refers to anyone involved in teaching or supporting student learning and may include academic staff, graduate teaching assistants, specialistlearning support staff, library staff and technicians employed by the higher educationprovider. It also includes staff not employed by the higher education provider butwho interact with students studying for one of their awards; for example, through acollaborative arrangement or through supporting placement learning.Staff participating in this study also identified

particular challenges associated with part-time workers and staff on short-term contracts.

Students reported that many of their interactions in taught environments are with Graduate Teaching Assistants (usually PhD candidates) and that this can sometimes be a source of concern:

> "It's not that GTAs are used too much, or used inappropriately, but they sometimes don't have the subject knowledge and they don't have enough knowledge of the aim for each session. They need more support to teach effectively".

Senior managers identified another group who may benefit from targeted development: managers of teaching at local and middle levels of the institution. Particular challenges associated with (for example) managing teaching teams for large classes, managing collaborative teaching with partner colleges and simply providing leadership in teaching development are not often addressed in development opportunities. In some institutions, there have been attempts to "professionalise" teaching coordination and/or responsibility for teaching impact by creating new management roles (typically, "Head of Student Experience") or by creating new academic manager roles (for example, in the Business School at University B a senior academic is seconded for 50% FTE to coordination of teaching activities and to dealing with student concerns around teaching).

4. How is the quality of teaching assessed? How is information on teaching and learning gathered and used to improve teaching? What works well, what challenges does the university face?

The UK Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA)'s Code of Practice (Section B3) adopted in 2012 includes the following indicator and definition of institutional responsibility for the collection of information to assess teaching quality:

> **Higher education providers collect and analyse appropriate information toensure the continued effectiveness of their strategic approach to, and theenhancement of, learning opportunities and teaching practices**.
>
> Higher education providers use a range of internal and external information andfeedback from diverse sources along with examples of sound practice and innovationto enable them to keep their strategic approach to learning and teaching underreview, to modify it as appropriate and to facilitate the continuous improvement of thelearning opportunities they provide.
>
> Data sources on which they draw may include:
> - feedback from students on their learning experience collected through internalmechanisms
> - feedback from students through external instruments like the National StudentSurvey (NSS), the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) and thePostgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES)
> - routine evaluations of modules and programmes incorporating feedback

fromstaff and external examiners
- feedback from alumni and employers and placement providers
- retention statistics
- mark profiles for students, modules and programmes
- availability and quality of teaching and learning spaces for formal andinformal learning
- uptake and utilisation of any virtual learning environment and assistive technology
- student academic appeals and complaints
- feedback from external reviews and accreditations, such as those of professional,regulatory and statutory bodies.

Evaluation takes place at different levels from the module, by the individual teacher ormodule team, through to senior management level and is appropriate to the modeand level of the provision.

Practice described by participants in this study is very closely aligned to the guidelines in the QAA Code of Practice and participants described well-established methods and systems for data collection at different levels of their institutions drawing on the activities in this list. For example, University D is educating its academic staff to use the evidence base to enhance their teaching. This consists of three datasets: the National Student Survey (although participants report that it can be a challengeto get staff to accept its evidence); the internal survey of university student responses (ISS); and other data relating to the quality of teaching including pass rates, retention, and projection rates.

A number of senior managers noted a generalised trajectory away from solely locally owned information collection (for example, individual teachers collecting bespoke data about their own students' experience of learning to implement local changes to practice) towards more strategically-positioned data collection protocols including institution-wide surveys and standardised online forms for the collection of student data about modules. Senior managers in a majority of institutions reported that the current wide variation in formats for the collection of student data on modules precludes the possibility of robust comparisons of performance across modules or programmes. One policy-maker described his plan to introduce a single online survey for the collection of student data about modules and his hope that this could provide valuable comparative data about high and low-performing modules (and, by association, teachers).

There is some evidence of concern amongst teaching staff about the implications of these kinds of systematic data collection activities at module level and the possibility of identifying individual performance and perhaps applying sanctions. However, at present, student data (and indeed other data) collected about modules by teachers is made available to their heads of department, School/Faculty managers and others with a responsibility for oversight of teaching quality. Senior managers expressed their preference for more systematic data "for developmental purposes", as a way of identifying good as well as suspect practice.

These views however, were not shared by all staff and a number of staff questioned the validity of current methods of evaluation and their institutions:

> "it is less a statement about teaching quality and more about student satisfaction which is not the same thing".
>
> **"**We have an approach to the use of questionnaires which isn't as thought-through and rigorous as it should be. I know this sounds slightly instrumentalist and quantitative but I don't think we've ever sat down as an institution and thought to ourselves; 'what are the genuine indicators of good performance related to teaching?' I think there are some implicit views on this – and you can see them in the promotion criteria – questionnaire scores and student feedback and so I don't think we've ever sat down and had a systematic think about it… I think there's still a strong element of student satisfaction in the information we gather rather than trying to gather information about the student learning experience, which obviously is different."

A number of participants described the value of peer review of teaching, especially when reviews include some element of externality. Practice across institutions appears to vary considerably, with evidence of well-managed and thoughtful implementation of peer review in many departments, and little or no arrangements for similar activities in other parts of the university.

Many participants commented on the difficulty of developing robust indicators of teaching quality:

> "It's about making independent, individual judgments: internally, but including external views where appropriate. You need to use proxies and these are things like the NSS: poor proxies, but they are the best we have. A lot more work needs to be done".

Student surveys, particularly the NSS are widely perceived as "blunt instruments". One senior manager noted:

> "They alert you to that fact that something is wrong, but they don't always tell you what is wrong, or what to do about it… we spend more time reading the comments box than we do worrying about the scores".

Students participating in this study reported their perception that "the student voice is very strong" and "we are listened to". Students participating in this study reported that in general satisfaction with the quality of academic staff is high. Students are typically introduced to teaching staff at the beginning of each semester, encouraged to read research or other publications created by their teaching staff and are offered multiple opportunities to comment on the quality of teaching interactions (for example, in staff/student committees). Areas perceived as more problematic are often those outside the classroom, but still recognised as an important part of the teaching role. In particular, personal tutor/advisor activities are seen as "patchy and not always good" by many students and there is some concern about the amount of teaching interactions that are provided by graduate teaching assistants, technical or support staff or other non-academic staff. Students noted that some methods of data collection do not offer students the opportunity to comment about these models of

provision (for example, student surveys tend to assume "traditional" models of lectures and tutorials delivered by academic staff).

5. How does the university motivate teaching staff to improve teaching performance? What works well, what challenges does the university face?

Academic staff participating in this study discussed intrinsic forms of motivation:

> "I like to be able to stand up amongst my peers and say 'I am a good teacher'"
>
> "I get a fantastic buzz out of teaching but I get a better buzz when two or three students come up to me after a class to discuss something and I know that I have started off a spark in them… it's a real personal thing, you can't even demonstrate it, it's between you and your students"
>
> "To contribute to someone else's development is a big deal".

However, participants reported particular challenges in implementing structural opportunities for the motivation of teaching staff. At research-led institutions, there has been a trend in the past decade to employ some staff on teaching-only contracts but these types of roles are increasingly being phased out, partly because they are oftenperceived as a "dead end" with little possibility of recognition, reward or progression within university or discipline/subject structures.

This problem is explicitly related to the impact of national funding models, particularly in research-led institutions. As one senior manager noted:

> "Until there is a REF equivalent for teaching – 3 and 4 star teachers – development of teaching will not be a huge priority, although the reputational rusks are potentially very high".

Managers at research-led institutions reported considerable anxiety about developing metrics for teaching quality, describing the task as "virtually impossible". Proxies such as student satisfaction data or graduate outcomes are perceived as problematic. At University C, staff employed on teaching contracts have been encouraged to engage in "scholarship of teaching" and there has been considerable top-level discussion about the extent to which scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) can offer a meaningful framework that has equivalence to the models used to assess research performance. Staff involved in these discussions acknowledged that University C hasn't yet got very far in attempts to codify SoTL in any practical sense.

This challenge creates difficulties in creating meaningful reward, progression or promotion criteria. At University C, in common with other institutions participating in this study, teaching prizes and recognition at local or institution level provide opportunities for recognition (and for funding to support innovation). Examples of good practice include student-led teaching awards, in which students are asked to nominate and collate and present data about teachers they value.

Similarly, at University A,a number of awards and prizes are given every year to staff who are viewed to be outstanding teachers, supervisors or demonstrate some kind of excellence in teaching. Individual staff members are encouraged to apply for these awards and recipients of these awards receive a financial award. There was some concern amongst senior managers and department heads that these prizes do not actually motivate but rather they reward good teaching - this was not in itself viewed as problematic, but rather the links to staff motivation were questioned:

> **"**Regarding prizes and awards – I think they are worth doing because it's a public assertion of value attached to it. I don't think it has an operational impact on the quality of our collective teaching effort. But I think it does have an impact in asserting to ourselves and to a wider audience that teaching matters to us. An appropriate reward for some appropriate effort. It's very hard work to be a very good teacher."

At University B and University D, both identifying as "teaching-led" institutions, routes for progression include teaching performance. University D has recentlyimplementedan Associate Professional promotion track. This offers a period of three years in which to gather material together to become a Grade 10 Professor. Three routes are available: one is on Teaching and Learning, one on external recognition in terms of innovation, and one on research. A similar tri-partite model operates at University B, and indeed at University C, although there is some evidence that, given a choice, promotion committees at research-led universities are more likely to reward good researchers than good teachers. As one participant at University A noted:

> "We're not, in fact, promoting people on the basis of teaching quality, so any reward, any recognition, we should cling on to, to use, because it's those efforts that make this place an extraordinary educational experience and so on. I hope that's not a significant percentage of the motivation. Certainly we do require demonstrated competence in teaching for promotion, throughout the scale, which has to be evidence in x ways. We all find, across the sector, that quite difficult to do. It is easier to demonstrate incompetence. It is very difficult actually to comparably, fairly, compare two people."

A number of participants discussed challenges associated with creating effective working environments to support enhancement of teaching. A key concern is lack of time. Universities in the UK are increasingly implementing workload modeling to plan and cost activities and many participants noted that workload models should include dedicated time for staff development in teaching practice and for opportunities to design and implement innovation and to share practice. In reality, staff in research-led universities are very likely to be strongly encouraged to spend time outside the classroom on research activities and staff in teaching-led universities are often asked to deliver greater numbers of contact hours and to deal with complex teaching environments (for example, large class sizes, collaborative teaching arrangements with partner colleges). Financial pressures on UK universities mean that many lecturers feel that they are being asked to "do more for less and to cover other people's jobs". Finding time for development activities is difficult, unless it is properly costed and recognised in workload models.

Similarly, cost considerations limit other environmental factors, including learning spaces for staff. As one participant remarked, this can be as simple as providing communal areas for coffee in which staff can exchange ideas informally but in times of straitened resources this kind of investment in additional space can be problematic.

A number of participants described challenges in leadership of teaching, and the need for additional support for coordinators, managers and other staff with middle-level roles to develop leadership skills. Although there is some anxiety about using the language of industry to discuss teaching activities, some senior managers discussed the increasing importance of "proper" performance management to encourage improvements in teaching and the need for good metrics to support decision-making and strategic resource allocation.

Some participants noted that Annual Staff Reviews could provide heads of department with an opportunity to tackle some of the issues in relation to good-quality teaching. However, in research-intensive institutions like University A, the overwhelming sense was that annual reviewswere being used as an opportunity to talk about research priorities not teaching priorities:

> "I don't think we use the ASR properly here it should be a conversation about issues, including teaching, but often it is not the research becomes the focus in many cases". This reflects the recurring tension that emerged at university A between a need to-continue to produce high quality research and to deliver teaching of a high standard (as indexed by module evaluations and the NSS) with a staff who overwhelmingly seem to believe that only one of these activities is valued by the institution.

6. What does it mean to be a good university teacher?

The QAA Code of Practice (Section B3) adopted in 2012 makes the following statement about effective teaching:

> Effective teaching and support for learning occurs when staff display a soundunderstanding and up-to-date knowledge of their subject and/or professional practiceand they bring this to a variety of appropriately designed learning and teachingactivities and assessment methods. They communicate enthusiasm, and draw onscholarship, research and professional activity to facilitate student learning. Staffcreate opportunities for learning which are effective by recognising the value of bothindividual and collaborative learning activities, the value of learning how to learn, andthat learning is about interpretation, analysis and synthesis underpinned by reflection,not just the repetition of facts.

Staff participating in this study shared their personal views about good teaching:

> "It's passion, enthusiasm, knowledge"

"Open-minded, engages with students, stimulates them to ask questions"

"[They] need to be open, open-minded and open to ideas from students"

"It's a real personal thing, you can't even demonstrate it, it's between you and your students"

"When it comes down to it, you could have all the [teaching] tricks in the world and be mediocre, or use none of these tricks and be brilliant"

"It's the individual… it's down to that and what they bring to it. Some bring a lot and some rely on structures to get by… they just use the tried and tested"

"One who is inspiring, enabling, generating change in others, and proactive. A team player, drawing not only on one's own resources, but knowing when to develop oneself. An expert learner."

"The university teacher is visible, and their practice makes an impact. He/she has a high level of curiosity, and a creativity which inspires the students. He/she is an enthusiastic lifelong learner, who can embrace the 'new' and learn from every experience, taking on the role of reflective practitioner."

"The importance of teaching is the ability to communicate with the learner. It thus needs a broad matrix of gifts, including a lack of arrogance. The good teacher, indeed, is someone who continually reflects on practice and whose approaches and strategies develop to meet their students' learning needs."

"Students are telling us they want contact time, being able to see someone on a regular basis"

"Students want to be impressed: particularly for 9 grand a year!"

"I ask myself this question quite a lot: you have to like people, because I think that makes you a student-centered person rather than focusing on your own expertise: that is the absolute key to it"

"I don't think that we can make good teachers, but we can help all teachers to be better"

"someone who inspires learners to be the best they can be".

"someone who shares their knowledge and understanding of the discipline"

Students participating in this study reported that:

> "It's about contact time, we want to be able to see our lecturers and talk to them"
>
> "Someone who is interested in us"
>
> "A passion to teach comes from within the individual: we need to recruit teachers with that passion."
>
> "If a teacher can be engaging that can open the door to a lot of other things: they can make it fun to learn"
>
> "Knowing that you can go to them if you don't understand"
>
> "Making you want to learn, facilitates debate"
>
> "A teacher who looks to build student confidence, the confidence to participate: university can be a scary place!"
>
> "You get some staff and some students who just won't engage. Some teachers just need to learn to prioritise the students"
>
> "We want to be inspired"
>
> "someone who teaches me stuff".
>
> "someone who supports my learning".

4. Major findings and policy recommendations

7.1. Identification of barriers to the quality of teaching staff with**relevance to supranational level**

Data from the UK demonstrates a universal commitment to provision of good quality teaching, and universal provision of staff development opportunities, at least for those staff identified as core to teaching activities. This is especially true of new academic staff, who are required to engage with development opportunities as a part of probation arrangements. The institutions participating in the study variously provide a wide range of development opportunities including taught accredited courses, opportunities to gain recognition through portfolio, mentoring schemes and peer review of teaching and continuing professional development activities.

Participants in this study report the increasingly important influence of the UKPSF as a mechanism to accredit staff attainment at a national level and to determine the overall quality of the teaching profile of institutions. Although there are some concerns that the UKPSF represents a relatively basic level of attainment, the UPSF

provides a UK-wide benchmark by which higher education providers can demonstrate how they support staff and assure themselves that they are qualified to teach and support learning. It also enables higher education providers to demonstrate that their professional development programmes and activities meet expected national professional standards. Evidence from this study suggests that the requirement to publish the numbers of staff members who have reached member, fellow or senior fellow status appears to have had a galvanising effect on institutional staff development and CPD activities and targets.

As well as providing institutional benchmarking opportunities, the UKPSF enhances the employability and mobility of staff involved in teaching in higher education by offering nationally-recognised and understood indicators of achievement. There may be some advantage in considering whether a similar pan-European framework may help to enhance general teaching quality across the EHEA and help to enhance the mobility of academic staff across European institutions.

Institutions participating in this study reported challenges in defining appropriate conditions for continuing professional development amongst teachers in higher education. The scope, level and content of CPD activities remain ill-defined and links to robust promotion criteria are elusive. Participants reported considerable challenges in identifying, sharing and implementing good practice within institutions or across the sector. Although some national approaches to quality enhancement (in particular, the Scottish Enhancement Themes) have created better opportunities for sharing good practice, engagement with CPD activities linked to the information created by the sector remains limited. There may be advantage in pan-national work to more closely define expectations for CPD for academic staff involved in teaching.

A number of participants in this study reported a need to further develop the skills of managers of university teachers, including course leaders, department heads, and facultyheads. The Leadership Foundation for Higher Education in the UK (http://www.lfhe.ac.uk/) offers development opportunities for top-level management, including the governance of education, but middle managers remain poorly served. Educational development generally focuses on the needs of individual teachers and does not consider the management of teaching. There may be benefit in considering a revision to ESG that recognises the need for institutions to address the needs of staff members with a responsibility for the coordination and/or leadership of teaching.

Recommendations:

- ENQA might wish to consider whether a Europe-wide accreditation model for individuals wishing to engage in university teaching might support the aims of the Bologna process

- ENQA might wish to consider whether further work at supra-national level to define or frame desirable criteria for continuing professional development for academic staff might support gains in educational quality across the EHEA

- ENQA may wish to consider whether a revised ESG might contain additional guidelines to support development of the effective management of teaching as well as for delivery of taught provision

7.2 Identification of barriers to the quality of teaching staffwith**relevance to national level**

Evidence from this study suggests that national arrangements for the accreditation of teaching staff are becoming more widely recognised across UK institutions, as a direct result of the inclusion of information about the percentage of teaching staff holding HEA Fellowship or higher status in the KIS dataset.

Some participants in this study noted that the move from an elite to a mass model of fellowship status mightchange the meaning and nature of such awards in unanticipated ways. Certainly, the mass requirement to attain Fellowship status may have an overall positive effect on the skills and knowledge of the higher education teaching community in general, but the "special" nature of Fellowship status risks being lost. There is some concern that probation requirements and current compulsory staff development activities do not cover enough material or offer enough opportunities for skills development (typically, compulsory probation requirements are completion of a 20 credit module at Masters level). There may be benefit in considering whether the current UKPSF framework offers sufficiently ambitious targets for staff achievement.
Staff in research-led institutions noted the pervasive influence of the Research Excellence Framework (REF) in determining recruitment and development priorities. There may be benefit in exploring future national funding models that re-balance research and teaching in UK universities.

Many participants noted particular challenges in defining and properly supporting scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) and in developing meaningful metrics to help universities make decisions about promotion, extra support or strategic resource allocation. National work to consider SoTL in the light of the current and future needs of UK higher education many be beneficial.

Recommendations:

- Universities in the UK may benefit fromnational work to ensure that UK-wide standards (e.g. UKPSF) are sufficiently ambitious and relevant to the needs of teachers and learners in a complex higher education environment

- Universities in the UK may benefit fromnational work to develop revised higher education funding models that rewardexcellence in teaching as well as high-performance in research

- Universities in the UK may benefit from national work to develop meaningful definitions of scholarship in teaching and to consider dimensions of "excellence"

5.3 Identification of barriers to the quality of academic staff with**relevance to institutional level**

The QAA Code of Practice notes that the term 'staff' refers to anyone involved in teaching or supporting student learning. Itincludes, but is not limited to, academic staff, graduate teaching assistants, specialistlearning support staff, library staff and technicians employed by the higher educationprovider. It also includes staff not employed by the higher education provider butwho interact with students studying for one of their awards; for example, through acollaborative arrangement or through supporting placement learning.

Evidence from this study suggests that current arrangements for staff development tend towards a "one size fits all" model that is unlikely to offer the flexible arrangements needed by different groups of staff. Some core activities that have a big impact on student learning do not seem to be amply covered in existing development arrangements (for example, personal tutoring) and the increasing complexity of teaching arrangements suggests that greater support for coordinators, managers and leaders may be beneficial.

In some universities, particularly those describing themselves as "research-led", recruitment practices do not always support identification of teaching experience or potential teaching excellence. Similarly, criteria for promotion or advancement are ill-defined. In "teaching-led" institutions where there appears to be less anxiety about criteria for promotion associated with teaching practice there is some evidence that metrics for measuring performance may be

Recommendations:

- UK universities may wish to consider undertaking strategic reviews ofeducational development/staff development provision with particular consideration for the needs of part-time, temporary and assistant teaching staff and for staff in leadership of teaching roles

- UK universities may wish to review the nature, scope and utility of continuing professional development opportunities (CPD) and to consider opportunities for strengthening requirements for participation

- UK universities may wish to consider how selection and promotion criteria might be revised to identify potential and to provide meaningful opportunities for staff dedicated to the pursuit of excellence in teaching

Institutional Case Studies

See additional attachment.