**SHEFFIELD HALLAM UNIVERSITY**

**CODE OF PRACTICE FOR TEACHING and SUPPORTING LEARNING**

**Background and rationale**
The University is committed to enhancing the experience of all its students within a supportive and inclusive learning environment (Student Charter).

The new University Strategy (University Strategy to 2020) includes the aspiration to become one of the best universities for the quality of teaching and learning. It is therefore important to ensure that all University stakeholders have a shared understanding of the professional values and practice associated with high standards in teaching and supporting learning.

In order to achieve the above strategic priorities, the University has an ongoing commitment to develop the professional practice of staff involved in teaching and/ or supporting learning, with an initial target of 95% of staff holding a relevant teaching qualification. This requires values and professional practice that are aligned with the relevant national professional standards and associated code of practice.

In addition to considering existing benchmarks and research (e.g. Chickering and Gamson, 1987; HEA, 2013) together with similar codes in the education sector, this Code has been closely aligned to the UK Professional Standards Framework for Teaching and Supporting Learning in Higher Education and the recently published HEA Code of Practice which enables Fellows of the HEA to maintain their professional standing.

As well as alignment with national professional standards, the Code of Practice for Teaching and Supporting Learning at Sheffield Hallam Univesity reflects the University's values and vision relating to teaching and learning which are embodied in documents such as the University Strategy and the Student Charter. The Code states the professional values and practice which are key to the development of high standards in teaching/ supporting learning at SHU and for maintaining professional standing within the University. As such, it constitutes a framework for professional practice, innovation and staff development in teaching and supporting learning at SHU.

**Purpose, scope and status of the Code**

The Code aims to:
• set out key principles relating to the professional practice of teachers and teaching approaches at Sheffield Hallam University based on the University's values and vision, the UK professional standards and the HEA code of practice;
• establish a firm base for the development of best practice as recognised by the sector;
• act as a framework for innovation in teaching and supporting learning;
• inform the course review process and periodic review;
• provide a comprehensive though not exhaustive guide to teaching practice for teaching staff across the whole institution;
• enable the University to identify relevant support and staff development activities;
• provide the University with a vehicle for ongoing professional development for staff involved in teaching and supporting learning;
• underpin peer review of teaching.

**The Code for Teaching and Supporting Learning**

**1.    The role of the University[1]**
**will be to provide an enabling framework through**:

1.1    ensuring that the recruitment process for staff involved in teaching and/or supporting learning reflect the stated professional values and practice contained in the Code;

1.2    providing opportunities for continuous professional staff development (CPD);

1.3    supporting and encouraging teaching staff to develop their professional practice, including the provision of an effective induction for newly appointed staff;

1.4    encouraging innovation;

1.5    recognising and rewarding excellence based on best practice as defined by relevant standards and research within the HE sector;

1.6    providing, implementing and disseminating clear and inclusive enabling frameworks and policies relating to teaching, learning and assessment which are reviewed on a regular basis;

1.7    allocating appropriate time for teaching, teaching- related activities, development and scholarship on work plans;

1.8    clarifying students' and other stakeholders' responsibilities in respect of teaching, learning and assessment through appropriate policies and other documents such as the student charter;

1.9    developing and maintaining effective administrative processes and procedures, including IT systems and associated technologies, to support learning, teaching and assessment;

1.10   promoting and facilitating a partnership approach to the enhancement of teaching, learning and assessment within the institution and its partner institutions.

**2.    The role of the teacher/ learning support staff**
**will be to**:

2.1    establish relationships with students and colleagues based on mutual trust and respect;

2.2    work collaboratively with academic and professional services colleagues, students and relevant partners to actively develop and sustain a supportive and effective learning environment;

2.3    act with honesty and integrity in all aspects of teaching, learning and assessment;

2.4    report to relevant colleagues and/or address any concerns in order to safeguard the quality of the students' learning experience;

2.5    ensure the safety of the learning environment in partnership with the University and its partner organisations;

2.6    take responsibility for maintaining the quality of his/her own professional practice and the currency of his/her knowledge in his/her subject area;

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[1] The 'University' here refers to the Executive, Leadership and Management teams which are responsible for the Strategic direction of the university as well as the development and implementation of its policies.

2.7     identify and/or develop and maintain effective learning materials, including relevant and up-to-date resources;

2.8     adhere to relevant published University policies and frameworks;

2.9     contribute to the enhancement of teaching and learning within the institution, in partnership with relevant colleagues;

2.10    develop and/or contribute to the development of innovative approaches to teaching, learning and assessment, where appropriate;

2.11    participate in the development of policies and initiatives relating to teaching and supporting learning;

2.12    foster commitment to the values of higher education within the context of his/her own institution and its partner organisations, including the adoption of positive attitudes and ethical behaviours.

**3.     Professional practice and standing**
**In order to fulfil the above roles, the teacher, learning support staff and the University will**:

3.1     use evidence-based and research-informed approaches to teaching and supporting learning based on research, scholarship and CPD;

3.2     ensure learning, teaching and assessment approaches take account of the broader context of UK Higher Education, including current policies and legislation;

3.3     cater for diverse learners and learning communities;

3.4     promote active participation, ensure equality of opportunities amongst learners and the free exchange of ideas with teaching/ learning support staff;

3.5     foster and encourage progress in learners through effective formative and summative feedback;

3.6     promote and foster the development of personal attributes and graduate skills to prepare students for future graduate employment within their chosen profession/ career;

3.7     develop and promote effective and timely two-way communication with students and colleagues;

3.8     monitor and review practice regularly in order to maintain good standing and develop further, through actively seeking and taking on board feedback from peers, students and more senior colleagues;

3.9     engage in relevant scholarly and CPD activities to remain up- to- date with knowledge of learning, teaching and assessment as well as subject matter;

3.10    develop and/or apply new approaches to teaching, learning and assessment, including the use of suitable technologies, to enhance practice where appropriate;

3.11    contribute to scholarship and the development of others through sharing successes and expertise both internally and externally;

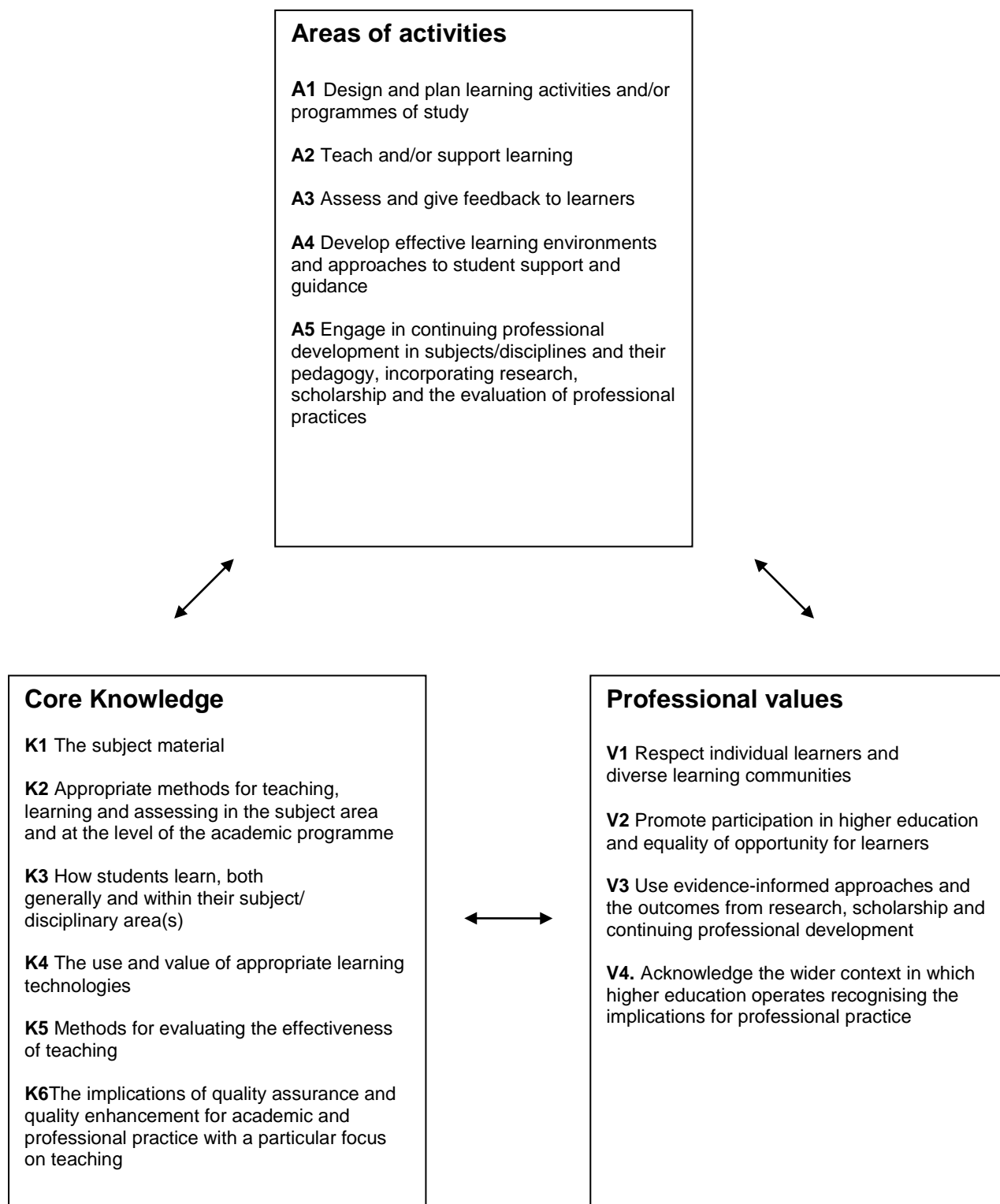3.12    meet the core competencies relating to teaching and supporting learning in HE (see Appendix 1).

**Core Competencies**

Based on the areas of activities and associated core knowledge as described by the UK Professional Standards Framework for Teaching and Supporting Learning in Higher Education (see Appendix 2), the following core competencies should be met by all staff involved in teaching and supporting learning. Please note that the links to resources are indicative and should be complemented by resources tailored to individual subject areas, where appropriate.

1    **Design and plan learning activities and/or programmes of study**
      Design and plan learning activities and/or programmes of study which are relevant and appropriate to the subject area, aligned to current subject benchmarks, as appropriate, and based on Teaching and Learning approaches which reflect current recognised good practice within the sector. (See SHU resources on learning outcomes, curriculum design, inclusive curriculum design and the UK Quality Code Chapter B3 for further details )

2    **Teach and/or support learning**
      Understand how students learn and how they might be developed as learners generally and in the specific discipline areas, based on up-to-date pedagogical theories, case studies of practice and own experience.( See Learning theories (Oxford Brookes Resource) for further reference)

3    **Assess and give feedback to learners**
      • Understand the role of different types of assessment and feedback and how this applies to the specific discipline area and/or support students' learning.( See Assessment and Feedback. for further information)
      • Ensure quality assurance, including safeguarding standards, and quality enhancement in line with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education and with associated university policies and procedures.(See SHU Quality and Student Success Site for further information)

4    **Develop effective learning environments and approaches to student support and guidance**
      Understand the impact of new technologies on practice and in the wider world, and consider its appropriate application for teaching, learning and assessment within the specific discipline area and students' learning in general (See Transforming Higher Education through Technology Enhanced Learning (HEA, 2009) for further details.

5    **Engage in continuing professional development in subjects/ disciplines and their pedagogy, incoporating research, scholarship and the evaluation of professional practices**
      • Be able to reflect and evaluate one's own teaching/ learning support practice. Tools for exploring and evaluating practice;
      • Be able to undertake and/or evaluate research, scholarship and relevant professional practices, including considering the implications of quality assurance and enhancement focusing on teaching and learning support, to enhance practice (See the UK Quality Code for Higher Education for further reference);
      • Use appropriate methods for evaluating the effectiveness of teaching and supporting learning.( (See Chickering, A. & Gamson, Z. (1987). Seven Principles for good practice in undergraduate education. AAHE Bulletin, 39(7), 3 7, 37 ; Good teaching Benchmarks (HEA, 2013) for further reference)

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**Approved by Academic Board, June 2014 (Minute AB/14/39 refers)**

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**The UK Professional Standards Framework for Teaching and Supporting Learning in Higher Education**

*Dimensions of the Framework[2]*

**Areas of activities**

**A1** Design and plan learning activities and/or programmes of study

**A2** Teach and/or support learning

**A3** Assess and give feedback to learners

**A4** Develop effective learning environments and approaches to student support and guidance

**A5** Engage in continuing professional development in subjects/disciplines and their pedagogy, incorporating research, scholarship and the evaluation of professional practices

**Core Knowledge**

**K1** The subject material

**K2** Appropriate methods for teaching, learning and assessing in the subject area and at the level of the academic programme

**K3** How students learn, both generally and within their subject/ disciplinary area(s)

**K4** The use and value of appropriate learning technologies

**K5** Methods for evaluating the effectiveness of teaching

**K6** The implications of quality assurance and quality enhancement for academic and professional practice with a particular focus on teaching

**Professional values**

**V1** Respect individual learners and diverse learning communities

**V2** Promote participation in higher education and equality of opportunity for learners

**V3** Use evidence-informed approaches and the outcomes from research, scholarship and continuing professional development

**V4.** Acknowledge the wider context in which higher education operates recognising the implications for professional practice

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[2] HEA (2011).UK Professional Standards for Teaching and Supporting Learning in Higher Education, p.3.