Professional Standards in Teaching and Learning:

an integrated approach to appraisal, professional development and peer supported review

Professional Development Policy and Framework for Academic and Learning Support Staff

Professional development is the ongoing planned maintenance and enhancement of professional practice, scholarship and capability.

Professional development can be both formal and informal and includes everything that is done by and for staff in order to enhance their professional and academic working practices in subject knowledge, skills, attitudes and capabilities.

The professional development of all academic and learning support staff is essential to the implementation of the University’s Corporate Plan (2008-13). The provision of an outstanding student experience is dependent on the efforts and capability of its staff. Through the Professional Development Policy and Framework the University’s approach to the professional development of academic and learning support staff supports the enhancement of the student learning experience and the aims of the Corporate Plan by:

• the development of academic scholarship and capability,
• demonstration and recognition of effective professional practice by academic staff
• enhancing professional practice a internal and wider higher education environment based on reflection and review.

Principles

The University's professional development policy and framework is underpinned by a number of key principles:

1. Supports research and scholarship and the development of learning and teaching
2. Meets the requirements for external accreditation and the UK sector wide professional standards framework
3. Professional development activities are relevant and responsive to individual, team and organisational needs

1 Endorsed by Academic Development Committee 12 November 2009
2 Professional services and technical staff engaged in support for learning and teaching
3 Details of the UK Professional Standards Framework for Teaching and Supporting Learning in Higher Education (2006) are detailed in Annex 1
4. Is valued and resourced by the University
5. The process will be workable, flexible in mode and delivery, easy to access, and transparent and consistent in its application across the University
6. Makes explicit links to the appraisal and peer supported review processes.

Policy Statement

- Sheffield Hallam University requires all academic and learning support staff to demonstrate the subject and academic knowledge, understanding and skills required to support an outstanding student experience, and to engage with activities necessary to maintain and enhance their professional practice in teaching and learning.
- The University will provide appropriate support to meet the needs of academic and learning support staff whether these be individual or in line with needs of departments, faculties and the University.
- The University requires academic and learning support staff to undertake a range of formal and informal professional development activities to improve the standing of academic practice across the University.

The Professional Development Framework

The Professional Development Framework provides a range of formal, informal, non-accredited, and accredited activities structured around three stages in the careers of academic and learning support staff in line with the UK Professional Standards Framework:

1. Staff new to the University
2. Experienced staff
3. Academic Leadership

The Professional Development Framework identifies a range of opportunities to support learning, teaching and learning support as outlined in the diagram below. These include activities focused towards the three stages in the framework but also activities which occur on a regular basis such as Peer Supported Review. Professional development activities also include engagement with research and scholarly activity or development activities in relation to maintaining an individual’s standing within their subject discipline such as conferences, workshops, membership of professional bodies and can include academic publication, conference attendance, and other related peer networks.

Appraisal underpins the University’s commitment to professional development. Reflection and learning from experience are encouraged and, to some extent structured, within the framework of appraisal. The personal development plan sets out the actions individuals propose to take in order to learn and develop themselves, together with what the organisation is committed to do to support them. This support includes allocated time on an individual’s work plan which for academic staff takes the form of Personal Scholarly Activity time.
In addition academic and learning support staff are required to engage in Peer Supported Review. Peer Supported Review is a form of professional development and is a developmental process through which individuals review and reflect on their practice, making plans and carrying them out, with the support of colleagues during the process.
Professional Development Framework for academic and learning support staff

Staff new to the University:
Staff new to higher education teaching with no prior qualification or experience, staff whose professional role includes a range of teaching and learning support.

- For example:
  - Induction and orientation activities: HR, Faculty, LTA, Technology Enhanced Learning, Associate Lecturers, Equality and Diversity
  - Mentoring
  - Postgraduate course(s) in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (for Academic / Professional and Technical Services)

Experienced Staff:
Staff who have a substantive role in learning and teaching / learning support to enhance the student experience.

- For example:
  - Secondment/scholarship opportunities
  - Advanced Practitioner Programme
  - Development opportunities for staff in key roles e.g. course/programme leaders, learning support and course management responsibilities
  - Postgraduate/Doctoral programmes in Learning and Teaching (for Academic / Professional and Technical Services)

Academic Leadership:
Experienced staff who have a leadership role in promoting learning and teaching / learning support and mentoring colleagues to enhance the student learning experience.

- For example:
  - Secondment/scholarship opportunities
  - Development opportunities for staff in key roles e.g. Academic Head of Department, Faculty lead on Learning and Teaching
  - Postgraduate/Doctorate programmes in Learning and Teaching
  - Advanced Practitioner Programme
  - Thinking Partners / Mentoring of ‘junior’ colleagues

Ongoing review, reflection and development
Maintaining professional standing appropriate to subject discipline and role through a range of formal and informal activities such as:

- Peer supported review
- Learning and teaching related internal and external development activities
- Scholarly activity
- Research activity
- Statutory and Professional Body requirements
- Consultancy work

Supported by recording, review at appraisal

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Annex 1  The UK Professional Standards Framework

The framework is a descriptor based approach whereby HE institutions determine their own criteria in the application of the standards framework. In order to demonstrate application of the standards, six areas of activity, core knowledge and professional values (all derived from the Higher Education Academy’s existing Accreditation Scheme) are applied to learning outcomes and assessment activities within the institution’s professional development programmes.

Areas of activity
1. Design and planning of learning activities and/or programmes of study
2. Teaching and/or supporting student learning
3. Assessment and giving feedback to learners
4. Developing effective environments and student support and guidance
5. Integration of scholarship, research and professional activities with teaching and supporting learning
6. Evaluation of practice and continuing professional development

Core knowledge
Knowledge and understanding of:
1. The subject material
2. Appropriate methods for teaching and learning in the subject area and at the level of the academic programme
3. How students learn, both generally and in the subject
4. The use of appropriate learning technologies
5. Methods for evaluating the effectiveness of teaching
6. The implications of quality assurance and enhancement for professional practice

Professional values
1. Respect for individual learners
2. Commitment to incorporating the process and outcomes of relevant research, scholarship and/or professional practice
3. Commitment to development of learning communities
4. Commitment to encouraging participation in higher education, acknowledging diversity and promoting equality of opportunity
5. Commitment to continuing professional development and evaluation of practice

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4 The UK PSF are HE sector owned standards. The framework for professional standards for teaching and supporting learning in higher education was proposed in the White Paper *The Future of Higher Education* (2003). In response to this the UUK, SCOP and the UK HE funding bodies invited the Higher Education Academy to consult with the sector to develop such a framework. See http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/York/documents/ourwork/rewardandrecog/ProfessionalStandardsFramework.pdf