

## OPINION

### University Teaching - recognition and reward

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Teaching in universities has increased in importance in recent years which, in part, is a consequence of the change in funding of universities from block grants to student tuition fees. More support for the development of early career and established staff has been provided by the Higher Education Academy (HEA) through workshops, including one for those new to teaching, as well as the introduction and development of the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF). While this has all served to raise the profile of teaching and give it greater recognition, it is also important that teaching is recognised even more fully and widely, and crucially that it is rewarded accordingly.

We believe that one way of achieving this would be to establish a fair, robust, transparent and objective mechanism for recognising and rewarding university teaching that is based on a review process that is supported by documented evidence. To achieve this we propose a mechanism whose outcomes can be fed into performance and development reviews, and used to inform decisions about reward and promotion, as well as the review of probationary status where appropriate.

We identify eight key ‘themes’ we believe should be addressed when developing and reviewing teaching, together with associated ‘points to consider’ and ‘key evidence’ to be provided. Crucially, each ‘theme’ has ‘observation of teaching sessions’ as one of, or the main item of ‘key evidence’ that should be used to inform the review.

Coupled with this would be a record of each teaching session that is observed to be included as ‘key evidence’ as part of the review. A teaching session observation scheme to achieve this should include written statements comprising:

1. feedback and review on the content and presentation, with positive features highlighted;
2. a statement on each of the ‘themes’, where appropriate, including examples of evidence that inform the review of that ‘theme’;
3. areas for further development related to 1. and 2.

Such observations are common practice in universities, and used extensively to support the development of staff and share good practice, but little use is made of these to make cases for reward and promotion.

Prior to any performance and development review, evidence would be collated by the member of staff, including the documentary evidence indicated below, as well as records of teaching observations carried out by experienced staff who are excellent practitioners themselves, and who command respect for their knowledge and experience in high-quality teaching.

For each of the eight ‘themes’ below the following are included:

- the ‘Points to consider’ for the member of staff and reviewer;
- the ‘Key evidence’ which would support the review;

as follows:

<b>1 Set high expectations which inspire, motivate and challenge students</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• set goals that stretch and challenge students of all backgrounds, abilities and dispositions.</li> </ul>	
<b>Points to consider</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you set about the task of inspiring, motivating and challenging students?</li> <li>• How do you ensure that your teaching is inclusive?</li> <li>• How do you use information from assessment in your teaching?</li> <li>• What in your practice is influenced by Departmental and University policies?</li> </ul>
<b>Key evidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observation of teaching sessions</li> <li>• Planning</li> <li>• Module results and student progression data</li> <li>• Consistently working within Departmental and University policies</li> </ul>

<b>2 Promote good progress and outcomes by students</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be accountable for students' attainment, progress and outcomes in conjunction with any staff supporting their teaching;</li> <li>• be aware of students' capabilities and their prior knowledge, and plan teaching to build on these;</li> <li>• guide students to reflect on the progress they have made and their emerging needs;</li> <li>• demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how students learn and how this impacts on teaching;</li> <li>• encourage students to take a responsible and conscientious attitude to their own work and study.</li> </ul>	
<b>Points to consider</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you monitor the progress of students?</li> <li>• What do you do to establish students' prior knowledge and capabilities in order to build upon this in your planning?</li> <li>• How do you give feedback in a positive, accurate and constructive way?</li> <li>• How do you promote the skills necessary for learners to be able to identify the progress they have made?</li> <li>• What do learners know about the standards of attainment expected of them in the next stage of learning?</li> <li>• How do you effectively use feedback in your teaching sessions?</li> <li>• What professional development opportunities have you undertaken to improve the effectiveness of your teaching?</li> <li>• How do you evaluate the impact of your teaching?</li> <li>• What strategies do you use to develop independent learning?</li> <li>• How do you plan and provide for learners to co-operate and collaborate?</li> </ul>
<b>Key evidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observation of teaching sessions</li> <li>• Communication with colleagues</li> <li>• Feedback from colleagues</li> <li>• Evidence of student progress</li> </ul>

<p><b>3 Demonstrate good subject knowledge</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have a secure knowledge of the relevant subject areas, foster and maintain students' interest in the subject, and address misunderstandings;</li> <li>• demonstrate a critical understanding of developments in the subject, and promote the value of scholarship;</li> <li>• demonstrate an understanding of and take responsibility for promoting high standards of the correct use of standard English.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Points to consider</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do you do to develop your subject knowledge?</li> <li>• Can you talk about ways in which you have adapted your practice in response to developments in your subject areas?</li> <li>• What approaches have you found successful in fostering and maintaining student interest in your subject?</li> <li>• How do you keep up to date with the latest developments in education?</li> <li>• How are Departmental and University approaches effectively reflected in your work?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Key evidence</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observation of teaching sessions</li> <li>• Self-review of teaching</li> <li>• Contribution to setting of learning outcomes</li> <li>• Range of professional development opportunities undertaken</li> <li>• Response to feedback from colleagues, including observation of teaching sessions</li> <li>• Student response/engagement (e.g. observation, formative and summative assessment evidence)</li> </ul>

<p><b>4 Plan and deliver well-structured teaching sessions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• impart knowledge and develop understanding through effective use of teaching session time;</li> <li>• promote a passion for learning and students' intellectual curiosity;</li> <li>• set formative (and, where relevant, summative) coursework, and guide students to engage in other independent learning activities outside teaching sessions to consolidate and extend the knowledge and understanding they have acquired;</li> <li>• reflect systematically on the effectiveness of teaching sessions and approaches to teaching ;</li> <li>• contribute to the design and provision of an engaging curriculum.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Points to consider</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you demonstrate good planning?</li> <li>• How do you ensure that coursework is relevant to, and marked to learner's needs?</li> <li>• Do you apply constructive criticism to new ideas, research and approaches and contribute to change and innovation in your Department?</li> <li>• Are you proactive in seeking, listening to and acting upon advice, including: mentoring, professional dialogue or other professional development activities?</li> <li>• What contributions do you make to, for example, departmental/staff, team, planning or other meetings?</li> <li>• What do you do to extend your students' learning outside teaching sessions?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Key evidence</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observation of teaching sessions</li> <li>• Planning of sessions</li> <li>• Samples of formative and summative coursework</li> <li>• Differentiated tasks</li> <li>• CPD</li> <li>• Presentations to staff</li> </ul>

<p><b>5 Adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all students</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• know when and how to differentiate appropriately, using approaches which enable students to be taught effectively;</li> <li>• have a secure understanding of how a range of factors can inhibit students' ability to learn, and how best to overcome these;</li> <li>• have a clear understanding of the needs of all students, including those with special educational needs; those of high ability; those with English as an additional language; those with disabilities; and be able to use and evaluate distinctive teaching approaches to engage and support them.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Points to consider</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you support and guide learners so that they can reflect on their learning, identify the progress they have made, set positive targets for improvement and become successful independent learners?</li> <li>• How do you make effective use of an appropriate range of observation and assessment strategies as a basis for setting challenging learning objectives and monitoring learners' progress and levels of attainment?</li> <li>• How can you show that you have taken account of specific needs of individual/groups of students within your teaching?</li> <li>• How do you demonstrate differentiation in your planning and practice?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Key evidence</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observation of teaching sessions</li> <li>• Planning</li> <li>• Assessment records</li> <li>• Samples of formative and summative coursework</li> <li>• Involvement in CPD opportunities</li> </ul>

<p><b>6 Make accurate and productive use of assessment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• know and understand how to assess the relevant subject areas effectively;</li> <li>• make use of formative and summative assessment to secure students' progress;</li> <li>• use relevant data to monitor learning and plan subsequent teaching sessions;</li> <li>• give students regular feedback, both orally and through accurate marking, and encourage students to respond to the feedback.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Points to consider</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you use information from assessment in your planning and teaching?</li> <li>• How is the Departmental assessment policy/practice evidenced in your planning?</li> <li>• How does your planning and teaching show progression towards appropriate levels and/or examinations?</li> <li>• How do you assess achievement both within lessons and in students' work?</li> <li>• How do you use assessment as part of your teaching to diagnose learners' needs, set realistic and challenging targets for improvement and plan future teaching?</li> <li>• How do you work with relevant colleagues to access and use local data?</li> <li>• When, where and how do you use formative and summative assessment in your teaching?</li> <li>• How can you show that data informs your planning?</li> <li>• How do you give feedback in a positive, accurate and constructive way?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Key evidence</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observation of teaching sessions</li> <li>• Planning</li> <li>• CPD</li> <li>• Samples of formative and summative coursework</li> <li>• Assessment records</li> </ul>

<b>7 Manage an effective learning environment</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>manage teaching sessions effectively, using approaches which are appropriate to students' needs in order to involve and motivate them ;</li> <li>maintain good relationships with students and exercise appropriate authority.</li> </ul>	
<b>Points to consider</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What factors in the learning environment enable students to feel confident?</li> <li>How effectively do you establish and build relationships with students and colleagues?</li> </ul>
<b>Key evidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teaching observations</li> </ul>

<b>8 Fulfil wider professional responsibilities</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>develop effective professional relationships with colleagues, knowing how and when to draw on advice and specialist support;</li> <li>deploy administrative and teaching support staff effectively;</li> <li>take responsibility for improving teaching through appropriate professional development, responding to advice and feedback from colleagues;</li> <li>take advantage of continuing professional development opportunities, both locally and nationally, and to incorporate best practice in their teaching.</li> </ul>	
<b>Points to consider</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do colleagues e.g. Demonstrators/Tutorial teaching staff, know what you want them to do in order for learners to achieve learning outcomes?</li> <li>How can you demonstrate that you are able to collaborate and cooperate effectively with colleagues and other professionals?</li> <li>How do you involve them in planning and the assessment and recording of student progress?</li> <li>How do you liaise with relevant colleagues to assist in supporting the range of learning and development needs?</li> <li>How do you know that you fully utilise the skills and expertise of your support staff?</li> <li>How can you demonstrate that contributions from colleagues impact on your teaching?</li> <li>What do you think other team members value about your contributions?</li> </ul>
<b>Key evidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Observation of teaching sessions</li> <li>Deployment of Demonstrator/Tutorial teaching staff support</li> <li>CPD</li> <li>Communication with colleagues</li> <li>Feedback from colleagues</li> </ul>

Any review should include:

- a commentary on the actual evidence addressing the 'theme';
- the reviewer's comments;
- areas for further development.

All eight 'themes' should form the basis of any review of teaching and common to all university teaching. It is also essential that a strong focus is placed on the actual teaching and learning that takes place, with evidence taken from the observation of teaching sessions.

It goes without saying that any scheme which is designed to recognise and reward teaching should not become a 'tick-box' exercise, whether it is one based on the framework above or something else entirely. To reap maximum benefit from any scheme of this kind it is essential that colleagues engage in the spirit in which it is intended - as a developmental tool which supports colleagues to enhance their teaching.

Finally, we note that 'university teaching' is about to undergo a revolution following the publication of the Green Paper in November 2015: 'Fulfilling our potential: teaching excellence, social mobility and student choice'<sup>1</sup>. As Jo Johnson, Minister of State for Universities and Science stated in his speech to Universities UK: 'There must be recognition of excellent teaching – and clear incentives to make “good” teaching even better'<sup>2</sup>. The Government has decided to 'drive up teaching quality' by introducing a Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) across the sector. The TEF is expected to be based on a set of outcome-focused criteria and metrics, such as scores in the National Student Survey (NSS), drop-out rates, graduate employment rates, and even the proportion of 'good' degrees (a first or 2.1).

We believe that a framework based on these criteria and metrics bears little relation to what we would describe as 'teaching' excellence as exemplified by the themes outlined above. We also believe that the TEF as currently formulated is unlikely to value the actual teaching that takes place in any meaningful way, and it will not enhance the quality of that teaching. Among a number of other salient and salutary points, Anthony Seldon argues in his article<sup>3</sup> that: 'Professional development of teaching needs to be embedded in universities, along with regular observation and feedback.'

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/higher-education-teaching-excellence-social-mobility-and-student-choice>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/teaching-at-the-heart-of-the-system>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/opinion/columnists/article4607170.ece>