

Exploring how professional standards can enhance the quality of teaching

The purpose of this pre conference workshop is to explore the potential value of a framework of standards for teaching in supporting the development and quality of teaching from the perspective of individual teachers, groups and institutions. It will also provide an opportunity for delegates to consider the structure and relevance of a framework for their own context. Participants would benefit from making themselves familiar with the UK reading the the UK Professional Standards framework for teaching and supporting learning in Higher Education 2012 at the following websites:

http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/documents/ukpsf/UKPSF_2012_v2_050912_1044.pdf

And to look at the Executive summary of “Measuring the impact of the UK professional standards framework for teaching and supporting learning (UKPSF). 2013. SEDA at

http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/documents/ukpsf/UKPSF_Impact_Study_Report.pdf

Background:

Across the globe international communities are considering mechanisms to support and train new teachers in higher education resulting in diverse progress and approaches, ranging from local initiatives supported by volunteers to the embedding of national policies. The UK higher education sector has been working with a National Professional Standards Framework for teaching and supporting learning since 2006. This developed out of the SEDA Teacher Accreditation established in 1990, the first national scheme for the training and qualification of teachers in HE. The UK framework provides a means to comprehensively benchmark, develop, recognise and reward teaching and learning support roles in higher education and is primarily used by higher education providers to inform professional development of faculty. It also provides the backbone of a national fellowship scheme and external accreditation for teaching and learning programmes.

Given the rapidly changing nature of higher education and the increasing emphasis on quality teaching (Gibbs. G 2010) a review of the Framework was undertaken in 2011 (Law S). Following revisions SEDA was commissioned to undertake research on the impact of the standards framework in 2013. (SEDA 2013). Evidence from the research suggests that the revised standards were favorably received by the sector and that use of the framework had increased. The research also found that the standards had a profound impact on how individual teaching faculty undertake and think about learning, teaching and assessment. There was also evidence that the standards have been influential across the sector in changing institutional practice. The purpose of this pre conference workshop is to explore the potential value of a framework of standards for teaching in supporting the development and quality of teaching from the perspective of individual teachers, groups and institutions. It will also provide an opportunity for delegates to consider the structure and relevance of a framework for their own context.

Design

The session will begin with an introduction to the use of standards frameworks and ‘standard descriptors’ to benchmark, develop, recognize and reward teaching and

related activities that support learning and to explore how standard descriptors can accurately define a good teacher in higher education. This will include activities to explore the coherence of teaching roles and expectations across the representative ICED contexts and the place of activities, knowledge and values in the articulation of this.

Delegates will have the opportunity to examine the UK framework and consider the factors that have influenced its development over time, including the SEDA accreditation approach. Discussion will deduce the relevance of this to the characteristics of teaching identified earlier in the session. The outcomes of the recent impact evaluation will be shared and developed through the exploration of case studies, which provide illustrations of different ways that the standards have been used in institutions to enhance the development of learning and teaching. Delegates will have the opportunity to consider the relevance of a standards framework to their own context and situation and to identify any potential developments they may wish to make in the future.

Session outline:

Introduction to standards and standard descriptors (15 mins)

Identify the characteristics of good teachers and what they need to do (Activity and discussion in small groups) (50 mins)

Exploration of the UK Professional Standards Framework for teaching and supporting learning (Activity and discussion) (20 mins)

The impact evaluation of the UK standards (Presentation. 20 Mins)

Exploration of the value of a local, or national, framework and ideas for the potential development. (Case studies, plenary. 50 mins)

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