

UWL REPOSITORY
repository.uwl.ac.uk

'Left with a title but nothing else': the challenges of embedding professional recognition schemes for teachers within higher education institutions

Spowart, Lucy, Winter, Jennie, Botham, Kathryn, Burden, Penny, Van der Sluis, Hendrik ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2543-6279> and Huet, Isabel ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6215-0448> (2019) 'Left with a title but nothing else': the challenges of embedding professional recognition schemes for teachers within higher education institutions. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 38 (6). pp. 1299-1312. ISSN 0729-4360

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2019.1616675>

This is the Accepted Version of the final output.

UWL repository link: <https://repository.uwl.ac.uk/id/eprint/5840/>

Alternative formats: If you require this document in an alternative format, please contact: open.research@uwl.ac.uk

Copyright:

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

Take down policy: If you believe that this document breaches copyright, please contact us at open.research@uwl.ac.uk providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

‘Left with a title but nothing else’: The challenges of embedding a professional recognition scheme for teaching within higher education institutions

With increasing moves globally towards the professionalisation of teaching in Higher Education, there is growing interest in the role of accredited professional recognition schemes which provide professional development for established university teaching staff. In the UK, There are now over 120 professional recognition schemes, resulting in institutionally focused evaluation studies examining their impact. This paper contributes to this emerging body of work, it draws on cross-institutional data and Foucauldian theorising to address two important questions. In what ways does engagement with an institutional professional recognition scheme impact on participants’ teaching development, and *how* does institutional culture influence that engagement? The data illustrates that whilst institutional culture drives engagement, it did little to promote teaching development. Across the case-study institutions, neo-liberalism agendas were apparent. Some staff felt pushed to achieve professional recognition in response to the increasing use of metrics to measure the student experience and to inform institutional standing in league tables. Whilst evidence shows the process of seeking accreditation *can* lead to an enhancement in teaching practices, caution must be taken to ensure that the professional development opportunities offered by accreditation schemes are fully realised.

Keywords: recognition; evaluation of impact; professionalization of teaching; professional standards

Introduction

The professional development of those involved in leading and supporting teaching, learning and assessment in higher education (HE) is established practice globally (Gosling, 2009; Kandlbinder & Peseta, 2009). Courses to introduce new lecturers to the practices and principles of HE teaching are the mainstay of educational development work (Gosling, 2009; Gibbs, 2013), complemented by activities such as pedagogic

1
2
3 research, teaching and learning conferences, peer review and mentoring. In the UK, the
4
5 2011 re-launch of the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) created sector
6
7 owned standards that provide a scaffold to shape the practice and development of those
8
9 working to promote and support student learning (UKPSF, 2011). The UKPSF is a well-
10
11 established mechanism for providing professional accreditation of the postgraduate
12
13 teaching qualifications new lecturers undertake (Gosling 2010). However, it is also a
14
15 route for established HE professionals to gain recognition. Through institutional
16
17 recognition schemes, they can make an application to gain fellowship of The Higher
18
19 Education Academy (HEA) as either an Associate Fellow, Fellow, Senior Fellow or
20
21 Principal Fellow (HEA, 2016).¹ Each category of Fellowship is articulated with clear
22
23 descriptors, with increasing levels of responsibility for leading and supporting teaching
24
25 and learning as you move from Associate Fellow. To gain Principal Fellowship you
26
27 would need to demonstrate significant strategic oversight for teaching and learning.
28
29
30
31
32

33
34 With more than 100,000 Fellows across the world, HEA Fellowship is ‘an internationally recognised
35
36 badge of professional success for those who teach and support learning in HE’ (HEA, 2018). Other
37
38 countries, such as Australia and the Lebanon, have drawn on the UKPSF and developed their
39
40 own ‘framework of good practice principles and evidence-based measures of
41
42 performance’ (Chalmers et al., 2014, p. 5). Schemes are also emerging in Africa and the
43
44 Middle and Far East. Whilst this paper focuses explicitly on data collected in the UK
45
46 context, its findings have implications for the development of HE teachers internationally.
47
48
49
50

51 There has been considerable appetite for established HE professionals, working across a
52
53

54
55
56
57 ¹ On 21 March 2018, the Higher Education Academy, merged with the Leadership Foundation
58
59 and the Equality Challenge Unit to form Advance HE
60

1
2
3 diverse range of roles, to gain recognition (Turner et al., 2013), and currently there are
4
5 129 institutionally based recognition schemes in the UK (Pilkington, 2017).
6

7 Engagement of staff in these schemes is often used to demonstrate institutional
8
9 commitment to teaching and learning (Kandlbinder & Peseta, 2009), though the extent
10
11 to which this is evidenced is contested (Gibbs, 2013). As the number of recognition
12
13 schemes has increased so too has the attention paid to evaluating the role, impact and
14
15 operation of these schemes (XXX, 2017; XXX, 2016 et al.; van der Sluis, XXX &
16
17 XXX, 2016). These studies mainly represent single institutional data sets (e.g. XXX,
18
19 2017; XXX, XXX, Shenton, & Kneale, 2016; van der Sluis et al, 2016), and though
20
21 common themes are emerging (e.g. around the development of reflective practice), they
22
23 tend to focus on impacts realised in the context in which they operate. The fact that the
24
25 authors are often evaluating their own in-house schemes could potentially lead to
26
27 inherent bias and can therefore have limited generalisability.
28
29
30
31
32
33

34 This paper draws on cross-institutional data to address two important questions:
35

- 36
37 • In what ways does engagement with an institutional recognition scheme aligned
38
39 with the UKPSF impact on participants' professional development, teaching
40
41 practices, values or beliefs?
42
43
- 44 • How does institutional culture influence engagement?
45
46

47 Foucault's ideas regarding discourse and power afford a useful heuristic for examining
48
49 conversations about the process and experience of gaining recognition. Crucially,
50
51 Foucault identified discourses as being historically specific. What is possible to say and
52
53 do, and who is considered to be the authority on a topic, is contingent upon the status of
54
55 the speaker and the "truth" (or dominant discourse) of that historical moment. In order
56
57 to address the above questions, we position the processes of gaining teaching
58
59
60

1
2
3 recognition within a power framework. We examine the power relations that both define
4 and develop, and are articulated through, these processes.
5
6
7

8
9 In this article, we expand on the evaluation study reported in XXX et al. (2016) which
10 analysed academics' motivations and perceived gains from engaging with the
11 institutions' recognition scheme. It found that in the main participants were not seeking
12 professional development but were instead motivated to respond to institutional
13 agendas. This created a set of conditions aligning recognition with probation and
14 promotion to encourage participation. However, at another institution, XXX (2017)
15 found that the main motivator for engagement was a desire to gain personal recognition.
16 Given that findings may vary, and over half of UK HE providers administer their own
17 in-house recognition schemes, the research team identified the need to look beyond
18 institutional boundaries to provide a more robust analysis of their impact and the extent
19 to which the original ambition of the UKPSF regarding professional development is
20 realised.
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37

38 **Historical context: Why the drive towards teaching recognition in HE?**

39
40 The discourses underpinning teaching quality are complex and problematic (XXX,
41 2017). What is considered the 'truth' is largely dependent upon the status (and hence
42 power) of the speaker. In the UK, policy discussions around the professionalisation of
43 university teaching have been ongoing for several decades, gaining impetus following
44 the Dearing Report's (HMSO, 1997) recommendation of the establishment of a
45 professional body for lecturers. The Higher Education Academy (HEA) was formed in
46 2004 subsuming the Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education and was
47 tasked with delivering educational reforms outlined in the Department for Education
48 and Skills (DfES 2003) white paper "The Future of Higher Education'. Key to these
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 reforms were new teaching quality standards upheld by teaching qualifications.
4
5

6 The dominant discourse emerging from these policy requirements can be understood as
7 the development of a 'regime of truth' (Foucault, 1994). Such a regime both influences
8 and reflects the views of members of the public (in particular students, prospective
9 students and their parents) and 'experts' in HE. This regime of truth extends well
10 beyond the UK context. Acknowledging this power dynamic, Foucault argued that
11 'truth' is linked in circular relation with systems of power which produce and sustain it,
12 and to the effects of power which it induces and which extends it" (Foucault, 1994,
13 p.132). As Foucault indicates, this relationship between the authorities and other
14 individuals comprises '...a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation,
15 distribution, circulation and operations of statements ... [and] is linked in a circular
16 relation with systems of power which produce and sustain it ...' (Foucault, 1994, p.
17 133).
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33

34 The circulation of these new 'truths' underpinned the creation of the UKPSF (HEA,
35 2003) developed through lengthy consultation across the sector (Law, 2011). The
36 UKPSF is recognised as sector-owned with the HEA as steward (Purcell, 2013) and it
37 provides the framework for recognition, but each institution has the authority to make
38 judgements about whether the criteria have been met (van der Sluis et al, 2016; XXX et
39 al. 2016). In the case of new lecturers, these judgements are based on the successful
40 completion of an accredited course aligned to the UKPSF, or for established HE
41 professionals through the submission of an application, or professional dialogue, which
42 demonstrates engagement with all aspects of the UKPSF (Asghar and Pilkington, 2018).
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56 In all cases, the UKPSF philosophy and process is intended to be progressive with
57 emphases on reflective practice and 'good standing' (HEA, 2016).
58
59
60

1
2
3 While addressing concerns regarding teaching quality is significant, we argue that these
4 processes represent socially constructed, problematic discourses, developed largely in
5 response to the agendas of policymakers articulated through the 'need' for professional
6 recognition. It is the use of institutional-based professional standards frameworks and
7 the tensions that emerge between the requirement for recognition as an indicator of a
8 commitment to teaching and learning, and the conditions for professional development
9 that is the specific focus of this paper.
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19

20 The degree to which the framework fulfils its developmental potential depends on its
21 widespread adoption and utilisation within HE institutions (Purcell, 2013) and this is
22 variable across the sector. HE providers have taken very different approaches with some
23 demanding that every lecturer has recognised status, some embedding qualification
24 status into promotion criteria (Cashmore, Cane & Cane, 2013), and others having a
25 more egalitarian voluntary approach.
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34

35 There is evidence that the UKPSF has had an impact on the sector. Turner et al's
36 (2013) evaluation found that it had influenced teaching, often strategically, through for
37 example, shaping accredited courses, and continuing professional development (CPD)
38 practices, supporting reward and recognition and influencing institutional strategy and
39 policy. XXX et al. (2016) found that experienced academics participating in recognition
40 schemes were not usually seeking development but were instead responding to an
41 institutional agenda. This highlights a tension between the developmental intentions of
42 the UKPSF and the way HE providers manage its use. Despite mandatory teacher
43 training in other educational sectors and over 40 years of educational development work
44 in the UK (Gibbs, 2013) recognition for teaching is not usually obligatory, and indeed is
45 an on-going challenge for many research-intensive universities (Fung & Gordon, 2016;
46 Gosling 2010). Educational development has therefore evolved in these conditions as a
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 support function for enhancing teaching practice amongst those who are intrinsically
4
5 motivated to develop (Gibbs, 2013).
6
7

8
9 However, there are a number of converging influences across the sector that are
10
11 challenging this premise; influences which assume a relationship between teacher
12
13 recognition and enhanced performance of teachers and students (Kneale et al. 2016) and
14
15 driving HE providers towards demanding the wide-spread professional recognition for
16
17 teaching staff. In the UK these influences are often described as the ‘marketisation of
18
19 HE’ (Brown and Cassaro, 2013) which has escalated with the introduction of fees in
20
21 1998. The introduction of a Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) in 2015, in which
22
23 the monitoring and assessing of teaching in England’s universities is undertaken by
24
25 central government (Forstenzer, 2016), arguably best illustrates the pervasive nature of
26
27 discourses around teaching quality in HE. Assessment of each institution is based on
28
29 standard metrics and a provider written submission that affords additional evidence of
30
31 teaching excellence (HEFCE, 2017). The TEF assessment criteria, emphasising on-
32
33 going enhancement in curriculum and student support, are likely to prompt further
34
35 engagement by academic and professional staff in CPD for teaching. Strathern (2000)
36
37 argues that audit and accreditation of HE are part of modernity’s quest for order and
38
39 transparency and policy developments in UK HE suggest that both governments and
40
41 students are seeking more accountability (Hibbert and Semler, 2015).
42
43
44
45
46
47
48

49 **Research design**

50
51
52 This study focuses on three post-1992 teaching-focused universities and former
53
54 polytechnics in the UK. Each participating institution had collected empirical qualitative
55
56 data to evaluate in-house recognition schemes. It is this data that was re-analysed in
57
58 light of this study’s objectives.
59
60

1
2
3 Although each individual study had its own aims and outcomes with respect to
4 evaluating local provision, the alignment of recognition frameworks to the UKPSF
5 meant that there is overlap. Consequently, each evaluation study had a similar remit in
6 relation to investigating the impact HEA accredited CPD schemes have on teaching
7 practice and professional development.
8
9
10
11
12
13

14
15 The re-use of existing data to address new research questions is established within the
16 social sciences (Bishop, 2007; Hammersley, 2010). Concerns that data becomes
17 ‘divorced’ from the original research context are largely overcome, as there is growing
18 recognition that studies using data in this way are not attempting to recreate the original
19 research but rather to recontextualise new perspectives or themes (Hammersley, 2010).
20 Indeed, advocates argue that all data, represents a construction of a phenomena, and that
21 any data represents an interpretation of reality (Bishop, 2007; Hammersley, 2010).
22 Others identify benefits including the potential for extending sampling populations and
23 overcoming logistical data collection issues (Mauthner et al., 1998).
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36

37 In each HEI the local research team provided interview question schedules, anonymised
38 interview transcripts and provided access to institutional documentation. In an effort to
39 avoid misinterpretation of local data members of all research teams participated in the
40 re-analysis of the data. In total 32 interview transcripts were included in this study; 6
41 were drawn from HEI 1, 19 from HEI 2 and 7 from HEI3 – the differing sample sizes
42 from each institution reflects the differing scale and scope of the original evaluation
43 work. Participants represented different roles, disciplines and levels of recognition (see
44 Table 1). Given that our interest was in experienced staff members we focused solely
45 on those who had gained Senior and Principal Fellow.
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

Institution	No. of interviews	Gender	Previously held Fellowship?	Role	Discipline	Level of Fellowship Sought
HEI1 (a-f)	6	2 female, 4 male		Associate Professor, Senior Lecturer, Head of School and Course Directors	Social work, Health & Social care, Science	Senior Fellow
HEI2 (a-m)	13	5 female, 8 male	6	Associate Professor, Senior Lecturer, Lecturer, Programme Lead, Educational Developer	Business, Finance, Science, Geography, Nursing, Educational Development, Marine Science, Computing, Maths, Medicine	Senior Fellow
HEI2 (n-s)	6	3 female, 3 male	2	Head of School, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Dean of Faculty, Head of Educational Development	Arts, Engineering, Science, Geography, Medicine, Education	Principal Fellow
HEI3 (a-f)	6	2 female 4 male	2	Academic Leader, Head of School Principal Lecturer, Senior Lecturer	Arts, Business, Health care Science History, Nursing, Social Care,	Senior Fellow
HEI3 (g)	1	female	1	Senior Learning and Teaching Fellow	Health	Principal Fellow
TOTAL:	32					

Table 1: Summary of interview characteristics

1
2
3
4
5
6 Each institution had gained ethical approval for their original study prior to data
7 collection. A second submission for ethical approval was then sought from the lead
8 institution for this study. Retrospective permission was obtained from the participants
9 involved in each of the original studies to gain consent for their use of their data in this
10 new study.
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18

19 ***Limitations***

20
21
22 In order to overcome the difference in sample population size and to prevent scheme
23 specific themes dominating, the analysis focused on themes common to all institutions
24 which resulted in some individual institutional themes becoming diluted. There are
25 potential limitations present in a dataset consisting only of teaching-focused
26 universities. However, these institutions each have a long history of teaching related
27 CPD; indeed Fung & Gordon (2016) highlighted the concerns research-intensive
28 institutions currently face in terms of ensuring the sustainability of a high quality
29 student experience given the predominance of a culture that values research over
30 teaching. These institutions may benefit from the lessons presented here in order to
31 foster a culture change that values teaching.
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49

50 **Data analysis**

51
52 All data were transcribed in full. Each transcript was reviewed by a research assistant
53 to reduce potential for bias (Hammersely and Gomm, 1997). Thematic analysis was
54 used to identify key themes and cross-cutting agendas (Saldaña, 2015). The outcomes of
55 this initial work were presented to two members of the research team, who reviewed the
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 provisional coding framework in light of the theoretical underpinnings of the study.

4
5 This led to the development of the analytical framework, which was piloted on a sample
6
7 of transcripts, and following minor revisions applied to all transcripts (Saldaña, 2015).

8
9 Through this process three themes emerged as discussed in the next section.
10
11
12

13 Findings

14 ***1) Institutional culture and the motivation to engage in professional recognition***

15
16
17 As Clegg (2003, p.42) observed: ‘top down institutional and quality agendas shape the
18
19 context for much CPD’. Recent work (e.g. Dochy, 2013; XXX, XXX, XXX, XXX &
20
21 Kneale, 2017) echo this. This is evidenced by the expectations for new lecturers to
22
23 complete postgraduate teaching qualifications (Smith, 2010) and experienced academics
24
25 to gain recognition of their teaching experience (Asghar & Pilkington, 2018). These
26
27 recognised institutional drivers are well established; here attention was paid to how
28
29 participants reconciled institutional drivers with their own personal motivations for
30
31 gaining recognition. Participants talked about the institutional ‘push’ towards
32
33 recognition, and were acutely aware of the power relations surrounding HEA accredited
34
35 CPD frameworks and the external drivers for engagement:
36
37
38
39
40
41
42

43
44 *‘I think money is a driver but I think some of the surveys are a driver[...] the fact that*
45
46 *they’re public knowledge now on Unistats, so you can’t bury your NSS scores any*
47
48 *more....students, and pre-students go into Unistats, they look at what universities, you*
49
50 *know how they’re matching up...because we are in a more consumer orientated*
51
52 *culture.’. (HEI3e)*

53
54
55
56 *‘Being absolutely candid, one of the main motivations was through the management of*
57
58 *the school and the appraisal process. I guess the message from the University, through*
59
60

1
2
3 *the head of school was that this was something that was a requirement [...] particularly*
4
5 *for people of different grades that would correspond with different levels of fellowship*
6
7 *and this was something slightly stronger than an expectation.’ (HEI1a)*
8
9

10
11 *‘It’s something that in my heart of hearts I’m not really interested in, but if I’m going to*
12
13 *do this organisational change work and work with [the Pro VC Teaching and*
14
15 *Learning], I need to...’ (HEI3b)*
16
17

18
19 In these extracts the strengthening accountability and accreditation agendas of neo-
20
21 liberalism are evident. Neo-liberalism calls upon the individual to enter into the process
22
23 of self-governance through processes of endless self-examination, self-care and self-
24
25 improvement (Petersen, 1997, p.194). This is often monitored via university appraisal
26
27 processes. Those that do not gain HEA recognition are ultimately likely to feel a level
28
29 of ‘discomfort’ which is problematic to sustain amidst increasing pressure to conform.
30
31 The circular nature of power is evident here as staff are influenced by discourses that in
32
33 turn influence student choice of institution. The external influence is palpable in the
34
35 language of ‘requirement’ and ‘obligation’ evident in these quotations. Whilst Foucault
36
37 (1984) suggests that individuals always have the opportunity for local resistance as
38
39 Hollander and Einwohner (2004, p.549) point out ‘even while resisting power,
40
41 individuals or groups may simultaneously support the structures of domination that
42
43 necessitate resistance in the first place’.
44
45
46
47
48

49
50 Interestingly, staff from HEI2 expressed mixed views, with some conveying a greater
51
52 sense of localised autonomy, and others recognising the steer from University
53
54 management to engage. Their responses are related to their positioning within the
55
56 institution, and their role in the management of others:
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 *I'm keen for my department to be able to say that 100% of the staff here have some*
4 *form of accreditation. I just think it's a really good marketing tool.'* (HEI2c)
5
6
7

8
9 *'We are a learning and teaching institution and I suppose fitting with that ethos we feel*
10 *that we should be supporting the institution as well.'* (HEI2a)
11
12
13

14 These institutional differences are also evident in the guidance that supports the HEA
15 recognition schemes and the presence of institutional targets for the numbers of
16 'qualified or recognised staff'. One of the study institutions documents school level
17 targets for engagement that are reviewed annually. Instead, HEI2 adopts a 'softer'
18 approach, and the interview data reflected this. As one Head of Department illustrated
19 below, the culture in their area of the University at least is one of encouragement rather
20 than enforcement:
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29

30
31 *I've been encouraging quite a few [staff] recently, and saying at their PDRs*
32 *[professional development reviews] two things really: What's achievable? Because*
33 *obviously you want to set some goals and targets. What is genuinely achievable in a*
34 *period of time?' (HEI2b)*
35
36
37
38
39
40

41 Whilst top down managerialist approaches to organisational change are often regarded
42 negatively (Gosling & XXX, 2014), to initiate a change in culture there needs to be
43 leadership and value placed on the activity. As Fullen & Scott (2009, p.102) comment:
44 'the ideal way to change a culture is for a critical mass of key leaders – centrally and
45 locally – to intentionally model in their daily behaviours the attributes and capabilities
46 they want the university to develop'. That said it does not follow that leaders gaining
47 recognition necessarily model the behaviours that gives credence to the activity. Whilst
48 staff may engage in the process of gaining Fellowship, they may simply be doing so due
49 to the external motivation from institutional leaders, or as a way to further their careers.
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

2) Ticking boxes? Perceptions of value

The perceived value of the recognition scheme was questioned by Senior and Principal Fellows from all three institutions. Simply put, participants felt that the achievement of Fellowship had more to do with institutional goals, staff promotion and/or recognition than enhancing teaching. There was little sense that the process of applying and gaining recognition was regarded as a CPD activity. This was surprising since there is a need to reflect on practice and engage with pedagogic literature as part of the application process:

'Academic staff just see [gaining recognition] as a 'tick a box', and that's a reflection of a traditional approach to teaching. "How dare anyone challenge my ability to bore students to death" ...alongside [the process of applying for recognition] we are looking to Peer Reviews of teaching and wherever I've been before that was custom and practice, but it was a facilitative process. What's happening here at this point in time is a contentious issue because it's seen as a management discipline tool.' (HEI2g)

The use of the term 'box ticking' by this Head of Department illustrates the strong sense of tokenism that can be evoked when CPD activities are driven by managers without conveying the real purpose and value. Also implicit within the above quote is that activities used widely across the sector to promote teaching enhancement and stimulate CPD, such as peer review, and UKPSF recognition schemes, become perceived as management tools rather than offering real developmental opportunities, that may in turn benefit the student experience (Hammersely-Fletcher and Osmerod, 2004). This view was endorsed by a Dean of Faculty who reflected "most of my colleagues see [gaining Fellowship] as a hurdle to getting employment" (HEI2o)

1
2
3 Whilst there are potential limitations of recognition schemes when regarded by
4 management and/or teaching staff as simply a technical exercise, within Foucault's
5 framework, staff also have a limited opportunity to 'opt out'. Although Foucault (1984)
6 suggests that individuals always have the opportunity for local resistance, this freedom
7 is somewhat constrained within the current climate of recognition. The quotations
8 below further illustrate the disconnect felt by some between the process of gaining a
9 Fellowship and the actual business of teaching students.
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19

20 *'They [the central teaching and learning unit] talk about learning and teaching, we do*
21 *it! A lot of people tend to be worried about being dragged into some very bureaucratic*
22 *exercise... it is perceived by many of us as not having anything to do with quality at all.'*
23
24

25
26
27 (HEI3d)
28

29
30 *'The tide comes in again really quickly...and you have built this from sandcastles, and*
31 *it's difficult to sort of protect them from getting washed away and be left only with the*
32 *title, and the fact that makes me more secure in terms of my career, but nothing else,*
33 *you know. I don't really remember anything else from the process and there is a danger*
34 *in that.'* (HEI1g)
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42

43 There is little published literature that evidences the impact of teaching-related CPD on
44 student learning (Kneale et al. 2016). This is in part due to the complex nature of impact
45 assessment (XXX et al., 2017). Studies have instead tended to focus on the impact on
46 teachers' conceptual development, attitudes, knowledge and skills (XXX 2017, Kneale
47 et al. 2016). Positive comments tended to be focused on the benefits of 'taking stock'
48 of personal achievements on their teaching practice, rather than the enhancement of
49 specific teaching, skills or attributes. There was also acknowledgement that it was a
50 useful process for the wider university and for the purposes of promotion:
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 *'It did cause me to be reflective, so I suppose that is useful [...]. It certainly made me*
4
5 *look more closely at what I had achieved.'* (HEI1b)
6
7

8
9 *'I don't really know whether I did find it useful for me. I did it as a means to an end*
10
11 *[promotion]'* (HEI2e)
12
13

14 *'I don't want to denigrate this qualification because it's very relevant to the current*
15 *educational climate in HE. I think, because I'm so long in the tooth now [...]if I'm*
16
17 *staying in HE as an academic yes it's useful but it's more of oh ok, I'll just have to go*
18
19 *and get it and it'll be another thing on my CV'* (HEI3f)
20
21
22
23

24 The dissonance between institutional drivers, potential teaching enhancement and
25 professional development, perhaps was exacerbated by the experience of going through
26 the application process, which as is now considered, was a cause of personal and
27 professional pressure for many.
28
29
30
31
32
33

3) 'Even more bloody stressed!': Juggling conflicting priorities and needing support

34
35
36
37
38
39

40
41 The dominant theme across all three institutions was the challenge of juggling
42 competing academic priorities. Neoliberal policies have led to significant reductions in
43 government funding, resulting in increasing workloads and levels of stress associated
44 with the pressures to perform across both teaching and research (Kenny, 2017). The
45 prioritisation of research over teaching was also very evident across all three
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53 institutions:
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 *'Everyone has it [the pressure to gain recognition] and they say "Do I have to do this,*
4 *you know, because I have got a lot else that I am supposed to be doing?" Like your*
5
6 *research, it's on top. (HEI1d)*
7
8

9
10
11 *'Am I putting my efforts in to making sure I can be returned for the REF? Am I putting*
12 *my efforts in to ensuring I am giving a good student experience? Hopefully 'Yes' to both*
13 *of those and then: "Do I also have time to apply to be a Fellow of the HEA?" [...]other*
14 *things take priority.'* (HEI2b)
15
16
17
18

19
20
21 *'Most of us are already working evenings and weekends anyway, it's not like there's*
22 *any flexibility to give us some extra time to do it, we have to just fit it in where we can.'*
23
24
25
26 *(HEI3e)*
27
28

29 Adopting a Foucauldian lens, individuals are regarded as constantly scrutinising
30 themselves in relation to sets of 'truths', and investing in self-forming and self-
31 reflecting practices. The dominant discourse of academics is to be efficient, autonomous
32 and productive in relation to both teaching and research. It is evident from the second
33 quotation above that applying to be a Fellow of the HEA is not regarded as an important
34 aspect of 'giving a good student experience'. Recognition is constructed as something
35 entirely separate and additional, adding to an increasingly escalating workload. This
36 observation echoes the way new lecturers talk about the competing pressures to gain
37 their initial teaching qualification (e.g. Smith, 2010). With both inexperienced and
38 experienced academic staff it seems that there is an implicit expectation to keep up to
39 date and engage with new teaching ideas, but there is no protected time to engage
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54 (XXX, 2017).
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 *'The cynicism creeps in because there's a voice in your head saying oh it's another*
4 *hoop jumping exercise...and it's another thing that I have to do which is going to stop*
5 *me doing my day job...which is going to make me even more bloody stressed.'* (HEI3d)
6
7
8
9

10
11 Taken collectively, these experienced staff conveyed the sense that the time investment
12 of engaging in the recognition process did not lead to any significant personal gain. This
13 lack of value may be a consequence of the traditional perception of teaching-related
14 CPD activities, as being of secondary importance to research (Fung & Gordon, 2016;
15 XXX & Gosling, 2012). Though efforts have been made to challenge this position and
16 raise the status of teaching and learning, including work to professionalise university
17 teaching, it remains an entrenched position.
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27

28 Despite increasing pressure to align with and perform in response to this particular 'top-
29 down' institutional agenda, staff were largely appreciative of the support they received
30 once they had made the decision to commit.
31
32
33
34
35

36 *'There is more broadly a sense of being invested in by the university and supported*
37 *through a process that, you know, motivationally...was helpful.'* (HEI1d)
38
39
40

41 *'We already discussed [recognition] in detail and in our [appraisal] we've had a lot of*
42 *discussion about this. When do you want to do it? How would you do it? So, I thought*
43 *our School is a really supportive environment to go through the process.'* (HEI3f)
44
45
46
47
48

49 Perhaps related to the time pressures, strong mentorship within the Faculties was
50 deemed as important across all the three institutions. Whilst academics were frequently
51 critical of the political drivers behind the recognition schemes, they were almost
52 unanimous in their praise for the staff supporting the process.
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

Conclusions

In this paper we have drawn on existing data from three institutionally-focused evaluation studies that sought to explore both the impact of engagement with institutional recognition schemes and how institutional cultures can influence that engagement to enhance or inhibit personal development. We used this to examine whether issues emerging from these individual studies are replicated and to consider the implications for the future role of professional recognition schemes as a source of professional development. Adopting a Foucauldian lens allows us to consider the complex nature of power in the recognition process. Rather than viewing gaining Fellowship as something that is individual, apolitical and neutral, this study reveals insights into how individuals negotiate the shifting academic terrain, often responding to the 'push' from institutional agendas relating to teaching quality metrics.

Whilst professional development was not always a clear motivator some colleagues valued the opportunity for their development provided through these schemes. We used the data to examine the impact of institutional culture on development, and whilst institutional culture drove engagement, it did little to promote development. Indeed, this position may be reinforced following recent policy developments, where the introduction of the Teaching Excellence Framework, placed the emphasis on metrics to demonstrate student learning (HEFCE, 2016). This could again stimulate a move away from enhancement and development to engagement for the benefit of league tables.

Across the three institutions, neo-liberalism agendas were apparent. Some staff feel pushed to achieve professional recognition because of standing in league tables and the increasing use of metrics in defining the quality of the student experience. The pressure to conform is seen as separate and additional to an increasingly escalating workload

1
2
3 with no protected time to encourage profound engagement. Since all the staff in this
4
5 study were experienced academics with significant management responsibilities in
6
7 relation to teaching and learning, the strong sense of obligation to gain accreditation is
8
9 likely to influence those under their leadership. In this context, these experienced
10
11 academics are ‘people through whom power passes or who are important in the fields of
12
13 power relations’ (Foucault, 1984, p. 247). Consequently, it is likely that less
14
15 experienced staff will also be impacted by dominant concerns about teaching metrics,
16
17 over other discourses such as professional development. Whilst professional
18
19 accreditation is often viewed as freely chosen and self-determined activity, adopting a
20
21 Foucauldian lens illustrates that the situation may not be that straightforward.
22
23
24
25

26
27 Our analysis of the data highlights a paradox, illustrated through the tensions often
28
29 experienced by those in academic development roles (Kensington-Miller et al., 2015).
30
31 The HEA extols the value of their professional recognition scheme through promotional
32
33 material on their website yet since the advent of the UKPSF revision, the sector has
34
35 been impacted by a series of converging influences (increase in fees, student voice, TEF
36
37 etc.) which have potentially perverted the original intentions of the Framework and the
38
39 conditions within which individuals respond to it. There is an expectation in institutions
40
41 (linked to credentialism and league table positions) that staff will engage but the extent
42
43 to which this is actually valued and developmental is largely assumed. Indeed, the
44
45 experience of engaging with this process could potentially inhibit professional
46
47 development as staff may feel it is too much additional work to aspire to the next level
48
49 and the juggling of conflicting academic priorities could further exacerbate this sense of
50
51 disconnect.
52
53
54
55

56
57
58 The picture is certainly not all bleak, there are significant opportunities to enhance
59
60 professional development provision through the implementation of professional

1
2
3 recognition schemes, to build a “culturally rich community of people who care about
4 learning and learners” (Fung 2014). However, the developmental potential of engaging
5 in this largely self-reflective exercise is severely limited if motivation or engagement
6 from critical ‘others’ are absent. XXX (2017) found that a continued engagement in
7 reflective practice and scholarship was one of the main benefits to practice for
8 colleagues engaging with the UKPSF. Including peer observation as part of the process
9 (as is the case for 2 of the 3 institutions here) may also provide opportunities for
10 dialogue and has previously been shown to enhance both the value and quality of
11 teaching across HEIs (Cairns et al, 2013). Similarly, a recent study by Asghar &
12 Pilkington (2018) also illustrated the developmental potential of professional dialogue.
13 Indeed, there have been renewed calls for career development and recognition for those
14 who have followed a teaching-focused career within research-intensive universities in
15 the UK (Fung & Gordon, 2016). This could potentially indicate a shift in attitudes in
16 dialogue in a group of institutions where research activity has been the dominant
17 measure of professional success. As Foucault suggested, acts of power do not render
18 us merely passive and compliant. That is, we can adhere to certain practices, thus
19 contributing to and reinforcing their institutionalisation, or we can resist by creating or
20 affirming our own way of being. Whilst in the current era, neoliberal discourses of
21 accreditation appear to dominate over developmental discourses, the data illustrated that
22 where accreditation was regarded as voluntary participants were much more likely to
23 value the process. Creating conditions in which individuals are intrinsically motivated
24 to participate then becomes an important organisational objective - if professional
25 development is part of an authentic vision.

26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
Clearly there is a need for further studies on this subject that encompass a broader range
of institutions (e.g. research-intensive and alternative providers) or include international

1
2
3 collaborations to examine how the discourse of recognition, teaching development and
4 marketization are exerting an impact on CPD. Rather than assuming there is a
5
6 connection between professional recognition and the enhancement of quality, research
7
8 that explores the impact of professional recognition schemes across multiple
9
10 institutions, building on the work done by Turner et al (2013) is needed. It appears that
11
12 individual institutional cultures may impact on engagement with these schemes and this
13
14 could be further investigated in a larger and broader study. Another key area for
15
16 investigation is to explore the role of the student voice in this process as student
17
18 evaluation, particularly through the NSS, is now determining what good teaching should
19
20 look like and institutions react to this in many different ways.
21
22
23
24
25
26
27

28 **References:**

29
30 Asghar, M. & Pilkington, R. 2018. The relational value of professional dialogue for
31 academics perusing HEA Fellowship. *International Journal for Academic Development*,
32 23:2, 135-146, DOI: 10.1080/1360144X.2017.1386566
33
34
35
36

37
38 Bishop, L. (2007). A reflexive account of reusing qualitative data: beyond
39 primary/secondary dualism. *Sociological Research Online*, 12 (3).
40
41
42

43
44 XXX. (2017) The perceived impact on HE teachers' teaching practice of engaging with
45 a Higher Education Institution's professional body recognition . *Innovations in*
46 *Education and Teaching International*. (published online)
47
48
49

50
51 Brown, R with Cassaro, H (2013). Everything for Sale? The Marketisation of UK
52 Higher Education. Abingdon (Oxon): Routledge
53
54

55
56
57 Cairns, A., Bissell, V., & Bovill, C. (2013). Evaluation of a pilot peer observation of
58 teaching scheme for chair-side tutors at Glasgow University Dental School. *British*
59
60

1
2
3 *Dental Journal*, 214(11), 573-576.
4
5

6 Cashmore, A., Cane, C. & Cane, R. (2013). Rebalancing promotion in the HE sector: Is
7 teaching excellence being rewarded? HEA report.
8
9

10
11
12
13 Chalmers, D., Elliott, S., Stoney, S., Tucker, B., Wickling, R., de St, Jorre, & Jorre, T.
14 (2014). Australian university teaching criteria and standards project. Retrieved June 16,
15 2018, from <http://uniteachingcriteria.edu.au/project/reports/>
16
17
18

19
20
21 Clegg, S. (2003). Problematising ourselves: Continual professional development in
22 higher education. *International Journal for Academic Development*, 8(1-2), 37-50.
23
24

25
26 DfES (2003). The Future of Higher Education. Available from.

27
28
29 <http://www.educationengland.org.uk/documents/pdfs/2003-white-paper-higher-ed.pdf>
30
31

32 Forstenzer, J. (2016). [http://www.crickcentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/TEF-](http://www.crickcentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/TEF-Whats-the-Purpose-booklet-Josh-Forstenzer.pdf)
33
34
35 [Whats-the-Purpose-booklet-Josh-Forstenzer.pdf](http://www.crickcentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/TEF-Whats-the-Purpose-booklet-Josh-Forstenzer.pdf)
36
37

38 Foucault, M. (1984). Space, knowledge, and power, in *The Foucault Reader* (edited by
39 P. Rabinow), Pantheon, New York, pp. 239-256.
40
41

42
43 Foucault, M. (1994). Truth and power. In J. D. Faubian (Ed.), *Michel Foucault:*
44
45
46 *Essential works of Foucault 1954-1984: Power* (pp. 111-133). London: Penguin.
47
48

49 Gibbs, G. (2013). Reflections on the changing nature of educational development.

50
51 *International Journal for Academic Development*, 18(1), 4-14. Gosling, D. (2010).

52
53 Professional development for new staff – How mandatory is your post graduate
54 certificate? *Educational Developments*, 11(1), 1–4.
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 Gosling, D. and XXX. (2014). Responding to contestation in teaching and learning
4 projects in the Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning in the United Kingdom.
5
6
7
8 *Studies in Higher Education*, 40(9), 1573-1587.

9
10
11 Hammersley, M. (2010). Can we re-use qualitative data via secondary analysis? Notes
12 on some terminological and substantive issues. *Sociological Research Online*, 15(1), 5.

13
14
15
16 Hammersley, M. and Gomm, R. (1997). Bias in social research. *Sociological Research*
17
18 *Online*, 2(1). <http://www.socresonline.org.uk/2/1/2>
19
20
21 HEA (2011) The UK Professional
22 Standards Framework for Teaching and Supporting Learning, York: HEA. Retrieved
23 from.

24
25
26 [https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/downloads/uk_professional_standards_fram](https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/downloads/uk_professional_standards_framework.pdf)
27
28 [ework.pdf](https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/downloads/uk_professional_standards_framework.pdf)

29
30
31 Hibbert, P. & Semler, M. (2015) Faculty development in teaching and learning: The
32 UK framework and current debates. *Innovations in Education and Teaching*
33 *International*, 53, 1-11

34
35
36
37
38
39 Higher Education Academy. (2016). Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy:
40 Code of Practice. Retrieved from

41
42
43 https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/downloads/code_of_practice_28.06.pdf

44
45
46
47 HEFCE. (2017). What is the TEF? Retrieved from:

48
49 <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/lt/tef/whatistef/>

50
51
52
53 HMSO (1997) The Dearing Report. Higher Education in the learning society. HMSO:
54 London.

55
56
57
58 Hollander, J. A., & Einwohner, R. L. (2004). Conceptualizing resistance. *Sociological*
59
60

1
2
3 *Forum*, 19(4), 533-554.
4
5

6 Kandlbinder, P., & Peseta, T. (2009). Key concepts in postgraduate certificates in
7 higher education teaching and learning in Australasia and the United Kingdom.
8
9

10 *International Journal for Academic Development*, 14(1), 19-31.
11
12
13

14 Kenny, J. (2017) Re-empowering academics in a corporate culture: an exploration of
15 workload and performativity in a university. *Higher Education*. DOI 10.1007/s10734-
16 017-0143-z
17
18
19

20
21
22 Kensington-Miller, B., Renc-Roe, J. & Moron-Garcia, S. (2015) The chameleon on a
23 tartan rug: adaptations of three academic developers' professional identities.
24
25

26 *International Journal for Academic Development* 20:3, 279-290.
27
28
29

30 Kneale, P., XXX., XXX., XXX., Hughes, J., McKenna, C., & XXX. (2016). Evaluating
31 teaching development in higher education: Towards impact assessment (Literature
32 Review). York: Higher Education Academy. Retrieved from
33
34
35 [https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/evaluating_teaching_development_in_he -](https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/evaluating_teaching_development_in_he_-_literature_review1.pdf)
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

60 Law, S. (2011). *Recognising excellence in teaching and learning*. Report from the
consultation on the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) for Teaching and
Supporting Learning in Higher Education. Available from:
[https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/recognising-excellence-teaching-and-](https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/recognising-excellence-teaching-and-learning)
[learning](https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/recognising-excellence-teaching-and-learning)

Mauthner, N.S., Parry, O. Backett-Milburn, K. (1998). The data are out there, or are
they? Implications for the achieving and revisiting of qualitative data. *Sociology*, 32(4)
733-745.

- 1
2
3 Petersen, A. (1997). Risk, governance and the new public health. In A. Petersen & R.
4
5 Bunton (Eds.), *Foucault, health and medicine* (pp. 189-206). London: Routledge.
6
7
8
9 Pilkington, R. (2017). *Annual Review of HEA Accredited CPD Schemes 2015-16*.
10
11 https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/downloads/annual_cpd_review_report_2015
12
13 [-16 - full report 0.pdf](#)
14
15
16 Purcell, N. (2013) The UK Professional Standards Framework for teaching and
17
18 supporting learning in higher education. SEDA Educational Developments Magazine.
19
20
21 13(1) Available online.
22
23 [http://www.seda.ac.uk/resources/files/publications_128_Ed%20Devs%2013.1%20v4%](http://www.seda.ac.uk/resources/files/publications_128_Ed%20Devs%2013.1%20v4%20FINAL.pdf)
24
25 [20FINAL.pdf](#) Saldaña, J. (2015). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*.
26
27 London: Sage.
28
29
30
31 SEDA (ND) Professional Development Framework. Available from.
32
33 <http://www.seda.ac.uk/what-is-seda-pdf>
34
35
36
37
38 Smith, J. (2010). Forging identities: the experiences of probationary lecturers in the UK.
39
40 *Studies in Higher Education*, 35(5), 577-591.
41
42
43
44 XXX., XXX., Shenton, D., & Kneale, P. (2016). 'But I've been teaching for 20
45
46 years...': Encouraging teaching accreditation for experienced staff working in higher
47
48 education. *International Journal of Academic Development*, 21(3), 206-218.
49
50
51
52 Strathern, M. (2000) Introduction: new accountabilities, in *Audit Cultures:*
53
54 *Anthropological Studies in Accountability, Ethics, and the Academy* (edited by M.
55
56 Strathern), Routledge, London, pp. 1-18.
57
58
59
60 Turner, N., Oliver, M., McKenna, C., Hughes, J., Smith, H., Deepwell, F., & Shrives, L.

1
2
3 (2013). *Measuring the impact of the UK Professional Standards Framework for*
4 *teaching and supporting learning*. HEA report. Available from.

5
6
7 https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/resources/ukpsf_impact_study_report.pdf

8
9
10
11 van der Sluis, H., XXX. & XXX. (2016) Retrospection and Reflection: the emerging
12 influence of institutional professional recognition schemes on professional development
13 and academic practice. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, 54 (2),
14
15
16
17
18 126-134.

19
20
21 XXX., XXX., XXX., XXX., & Kneale, P. (2017). Evaluating academic developers'
22 reflections on using a toolkit resource. *Higher Education Research & Development*.
23
24
25
26 36(7), 1503-1514.

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

For Peer Review Only

Institution	No. of interviews	Gender	Previously held Fellowship?	Role	Discipline	Level of Fellowship Sought
HEI1 (a-f)	6	2 female, 4 male		Associate Professor, Senior Lecturer, Head of School and Course Directors	Social work, Health & Social care, Science	Senior Fellow
HEI2 (a-m)	13	5 female, 8 male	6	Associate Professor, Senior Lecturer, Lecturer, Programme Lead, Educational Developer	Business, Finance, Science, Geography, Nursing, Educational Development, Marine Science, Computing, Maths, Medicine	Senior Fellow
HEI2 (n-s)	6	3 female, 3 male	2	Head of School, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Dean of Faculty, Head of Educational Development	Arts, Engineering, Science, Geography, Medicine, Education	Principal Fellow
HEI3 (a-f)	6	2 female 4 male	2	Academic Leader, Head of School Principal Lecturer, Senior Lecturer	Arts, Business, Health care Science History, Nursing, Social Care,	Senior Fellow
HEI3 (g)	1	female	1	Senior Learning and Teaching Fellow	Health	Principal Fellow
TOTAL:	32					

Table 1: Summary of interview characteristics