



Consultation Questions

The National Forum for the enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education has launched a consultation on proposals for the establishment and management of a professional development framework for those who teach in Irish higher education.

We want to hear what you think about the options for a professional development framework and the way it could meet your needs.

Submission Details:

Name of Organisation: Learning, Teaching and Technology Centre (LTTTC), Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT)

Name of person responsible for making the actual submission to the consultation process: Dr Jen Harvey

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Please submit a response to some or all of the following questions:

Firstly, we appreciate the opportunity to contribute to the consultation phase of this important aspect of teaching and learning in Irish higher education. We are basing our response on the experiences and documented research on the impact of the activities of the LTTTC over the past 16 years. We are also informed by our experience of working with colleagues within this and other institutions as learners, lecturers, educational developers, learning technologists, and researchers.

The LTTTC has been involved in developing, facilitating and evaluating professional development activities since 1999. We have developed a diverse range of programmes including the Postgraduate Diploma in Third Level Learning and Teaching, MA in Higher Education and MSc in Applied eLearning. We also have over 15 CPDs as well other activities including Teaching Fellowships, annual Graduate conference, annual E-Learning Summer School, annual Irish Journal of Academic Practice (IJAP), annual Showcase and over 100 workshops. As well as extensive evidence based on evaluation data relating to the programmes and other activities, we have conducting research and published on our work such as the most recently published: McAvinia, C., Donnelly, R., McDonnell, C., Hanratty, O., & Harvey, J. (2015) Does accredited professional development for academics improve teaching and learning in higher education? In Ribeiro, F.M., Politis, Y. and Culum, B. (Eds.) *New Voices in Higher Education Research and Scholarship* p. 253-272. Hershey: IGI Global.

All publications listed on our website: <http://www.dit.ie/lttc/researchscholarship/>

and our research profiles: <http://www.dit.ie/lttc/about/lttcstaff/>



Q1 What kind of professional development framework is needed to meet the needs of those teaching in higher education in Ireland?

We believe that a professional framework for those involved in teaching and supporting learning in higher education should aim to be:

- Values-led: as noted below;
- Flexible: to acknowledge and support staff engaged in teaching and supporting learning at various stages (early career and mid to late career);
- Authentic: capture professional practice;
- Evidence -informed: acknowledgement of teaching activities beyond and including qualification from accredited programmes;
- Feasible: staff engaged in teaching and supporting learning to evidence existing engagement in professional development and be motivated to continue professional development without needing to engage in onerous tasks beyond the usual practice;
- Motivating: staff feel encouraged to participate in the framework to capture their professional practice.

A Framework to support and acknowledge professional development should be underpinned by core values which are recognised as being associated with effective and advanced practice in the role of teaching and supporting learning in higher education such as:

- reflective practice;
- scholarship;
- evidence - informed practice;
- student-centred learning;
- disciplinary expertise;
- practice-based learning (role modelling);
- respect for diversity;
- acknowledgement of lifelong learning both in higher education and beyond in professional practice and within our communities;
- collaborative / peer community building;
- cross-disciplinary and institutional collaboration.

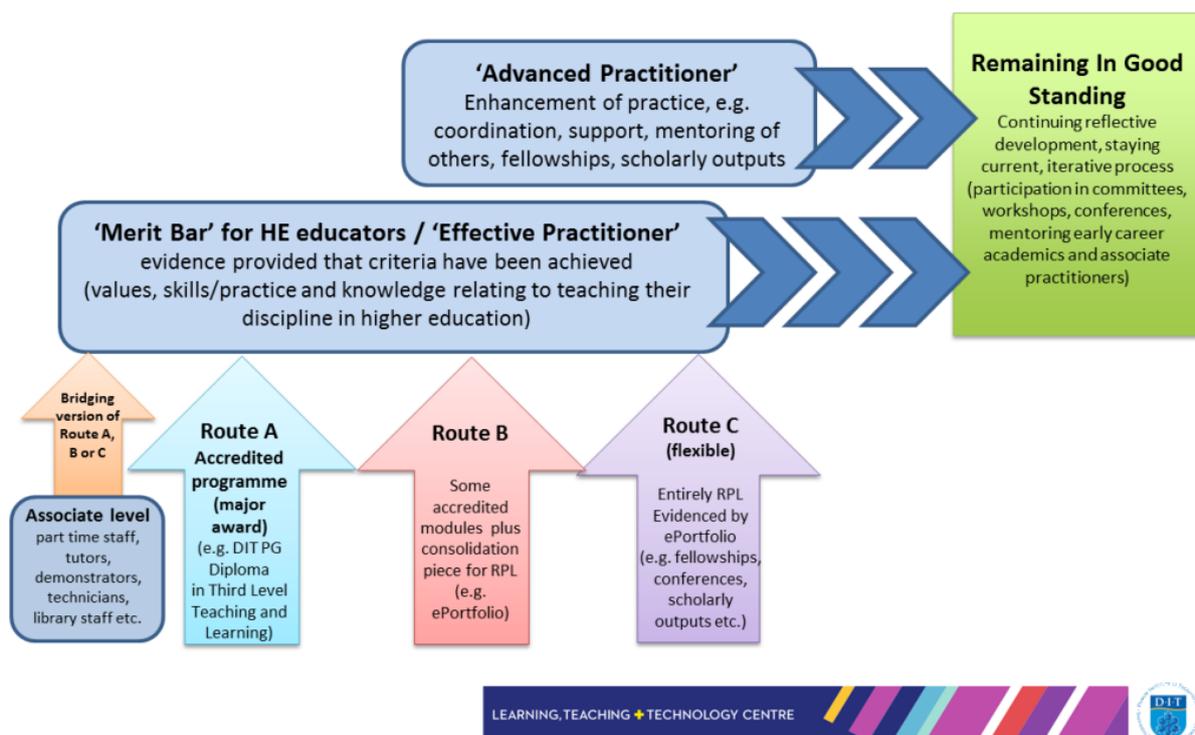
Activities or practices which could be associated with these values could include: 'curriculum development', 'planning of learning activities', 'use of technology', 'self-evaluation', 'peer and student feedback' -

The framework should support both staff in the early stage of their career as well as those in mid to late stages of their careers in higher education. It should allow staff to evidence their values, knowledge and practices in terms of being an effective practitioner as well as motivate them to maintain and build on this level of commitment to their role of supporting learning by encouraging further development, learning and scholarly practice.

Q2 Based on the models of professional development presented, is there any particular model either whole or in part which you think might be relevant to an Irish professional development framework?

We present our own model here which incorporate two levels - one noting initial acknowledgement of effectiveness as an educator in higher education and maintaining this as well as a second level allowing for evidencing of advanced / enhanced practice and maintaining this level.

Model with Two Main Stages and Associate Level



We are proposing a two stage model which allows for recognition of those who show evidence of being an 'Effective Practitioner' and the second stage to recognise those who show evidence of 'Advanced' practice in a range of aspects of their teaching role relating to their discipline.

The first stage may be framed as the 'merit bar' for educators in Higher Education and deemed an 'Effective Practitioner'. This would be based on evidence to meet criteria associated with professional values, skills/ practice and knowledge related to teaching their discipline in higher education. This stage may be reached by a variety of routes. For example, Route A is via the initial accredited, postgraduate programme which is a major award (Level 9 - 60 ECTS). The DIT Postgraduate Diploma in Third Level Learning and Teaching is our initial programme which all new lecturers to DIT are highly recommended to



successfully complete within their first two years of employment. Routes B and C allow those who have minor awards (e.g. PG Certificate in Learning, Teaching and Assessment (5 ECTS)) or other CPDs (such as e.g. Assessment and Feedback (5 ECTS), Higher Education Policy (10 ECTS), Technology Enhanced Teaching, Learning and Assessment (5 ECTS)) and or a DIT Fellowship i.e. to 'accumulate' or evidence substantial engagement in activities or professional learning and practice experience which could be recognised at a level comparable with a Level 9 major award.

This professional learning and engagement could be evidenced using a format such as an EPortfolio which can be reviewed for the purposes of recognition of prior learning (RPL).

It would be expected that those who are recognised at either 'Effective' or 'Advanced' level would remain in 'good standing' by evidence of engaging in further professional development achievements such as a Fellowship, Teaching Award or peer reviewed publication.

While there are some useful aspects to the four models presented within the consultation document, we agree with many of the opportunities and challenges noted in association with each of these models. However, we also have some additional comments and concerns in relation to these and we hope that our model captures a more flexible approach and synthesis of models 3 and 4.

Q3 How can the framework integrate and recognise the following:

- **existing accredited and non-accredited provision?**
- **Existing professional work-based learning**

As noted above in the model, the RPL approach is incorporated.

Q4 What management structure would help to make the professional development framework sustainable and give it on-going credibility nationally and internationally?

We believe that there are currently supportive management structures in place in DIT to accommodate and recognise professional development at various levels. We recognise the importance of the student voice such as local QA processes Q6A (student evaluation forms) and the national student survey (ISSE). These could be built into each phase of the model, as part of the descriptors/criteria. DIT has PMDS and the framework could be linked in with this in terms of goals and achievements relating to teaching development could be emphasised in PMDS processes with reference to the framework.

The recruitment, probation and promotion processes already acknowledge the value of teaching in terms of highly recommended that new lecturers should participate in and successfully complete the PG Diploma within their first two years of appointment as a full time lecturer.



NATIONAL FORUM

FOR THE ENHANCEMENT OF TEACHING
AND LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

MAPPING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PATHWAYS
FOR THOSE WHO TEACH IN IRISH HIGHER EDUCATION:
WHERE ARE WE NOW AND WHERE DO WE WANT TO GO?

We anticipate that our model for a professional development framework would empower staff to flourish in the complex, challenging context of contemporary HE and within the time and resource constraints.