



# Empowering Module Leaders: A Professional Development Framework for Enhancing Academic Practice

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# Objectives

1

Appreciate the importance of module leaders in HE and the challenges they face in engaging in Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programmes

2

Explore a flexible and accessible CPD framework that balances short-term needs and long-term professional development.

3

Understand the value of integrating both top-down and bottom-up approaches in the design of CPD programmes.

# Challenges for Module Leaders in Engaging with CPD

- Module Leaders (academics) face structural, contractual, and pedagogical barriers to engagement (Advance HE, 2023; Briggs, 2026)
- **Lack of structured induction**
  - Many Module Leaders begin without systematic induction into academic practice
  - Induction is often voluntary or inconsistent
  - This risks misalignment with institutional expectations (Advance HE, 2023)



# Challenges for Module Leaders in Engaging with CPD

- **Limited CPD opportunities**

- New academics, practitioner-teachers, and part-time staff have limited access to CPD
- Many CPD models assume full-time, campus-based roles
- This creates inequitable development opportunities (Briggs, 2026)

- **Scheduling and structural challenges**

- Different workloads and external commitments limit CPD participation
- Variation across faculties and partner institutions complicates coordination
- Poor alignment can undermine CPD effectiveness (Briggs, 2026)

# Challenges for Module Leaders in Engaging with CPD

- **Voluntary and undefined induction risks**

- Undefined induction leads to inconsistent teaching practices
- Knowledge gaps may affect assessment and curriculum delivery
- A shared pedagogical culture requires structured support (Advance HE, 2023)

- **Responding to technological change**

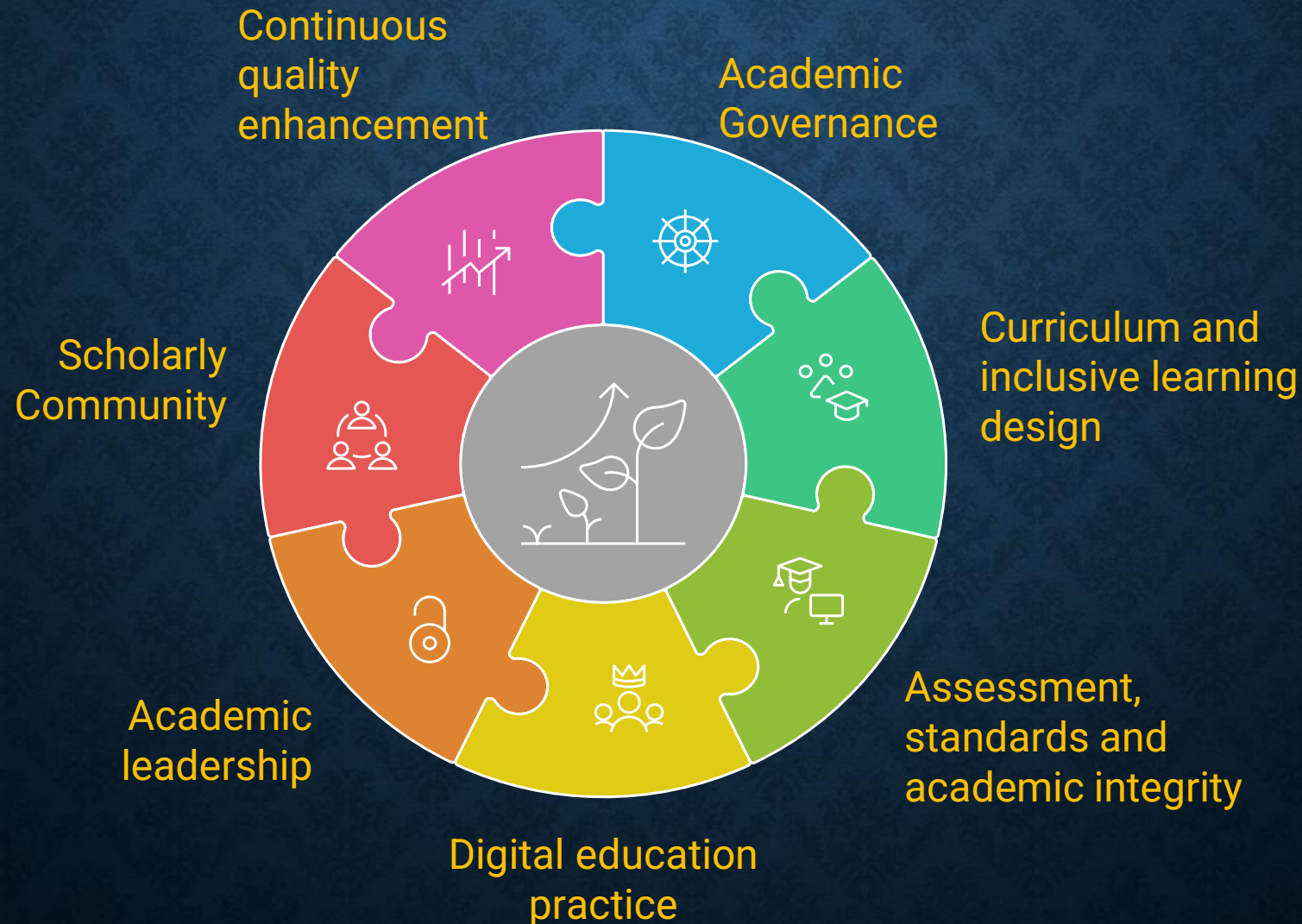
- Rapid digital change requires continuous upskilling
- Module Leaders need pedagogically grounded technology training
- Time constraints remain a major barrier (Uzorka et al., 2023)

- **Implications for CPD design**

- Institutions should offer structured and inclusive CPD pathways
- CPD should be flexible, role-specific, and standards-aligned
- Alignment with PSF 2023 supports quality and recognition (Advance HE, 2023)



# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK



# Professional Development Framework

- **Academic governance**

- Purpose

- ✓ To ensure every module leader begins with a clear, consistent, and supported understanding of their role
    - ✓ To have a stronger alignment with institutional processes

- Focus areas

- ✓ Role definition and responsibilities
    - ✓ Development and review of Module Leadership Induction Framework

## Getting Started

Module Leaders Handbook

Getting Started

Assessment & Exam Boards

Student Experience

Other Useful Things

### Role & Responsibilities

The Module Specification

The Module Run/Timetabling

The Module Handbook

Setting Assessment Hand-in Dates

Blackboard

## Role & Responsibilities

This document is designed to support Module Leaders in the Faculty of Environment & Technology to understand and fulfil their role and to support the Faculty in maintaining academic standards and enhancing quality across its modules.

### Some useful general reference points

The [Academic Practice Directorate](#) is designed to support learning and teaching and contains a collection of projects, events and resources focused on enriching and enhancing learning and teaching practice.

**The APD also run regular workshops for new module leaders** and other more focussed workshops about writing learning outcomes, designing assessments etc. that you would find extremely useful.

The [Staff Administration Manual \(SAM\)](#) is an online resource for UWE staff to share information around administrative and student facing activities.

If you have examples of good practice that would be helpful to include in this guidance AND/OR where you find the guidance is unclear AND/OR you feel changes should be made please inform Judith Ritchie ([Judith.Ritchie@uwe.ac.uk](mailto:Judith.Ritchie@uwe.ac.uk)).

### In general, it is a Module Leader's responsibility to:

- Actively take a lead and participate in the design, development, delivery and assessment of the module.
- Ensure that their module delivers a positive student and staff experience and is in line with the University goals as expressed in [Strategy 2030](#). There are important core and thematic strategies that underpin this. I have included just a few below that are likely to be of particular interest to you as a module leader.
- [Transforming Futures Learning and Teaching Strategy](#)
- [Transforming Futures Community and Business Engagement Strategy](#)
- [Transforming Futures Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity Strategy](#)
- Take overall responsibility for the academic health and currency of the module and be accountable for the quality of the

# Professional Development Framework

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- **Curriculum and inclusive learning design**

- Purpose

- ✓ To design coherent, inclusive, and engaging learning experiences responding to diverse student needs and real-world contexts

- Focus areas

- ✓ Module Design foundations: Learning outcomes design, scaffolding learning, Digital and AI-enhanced learning design, assessment integration)
    - ✓ Pedagogical Approaches (Blended learning design, Active and experiential learning, etc)
    - ✓ Inclusion and accessibility
    - ✓ Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)
    - ✓ Engagement and experience design

# Professional Development Framework

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- **Assessment, standards and academic integrity**
  - Purpose
    - ✓ To ensure assessment is valid, reliable, inclusive, and aligned with academic standards
  - Focus areas
    - ✓ Authentic and accessible assessment design
    - ✓ Rubric development
    - ✓ Feedback literacy
    - ✓ Moderation and calibration
    - ✓ External examiner procedures
    - ✓ Academic integrity and misconduct



# Professional Development Framework

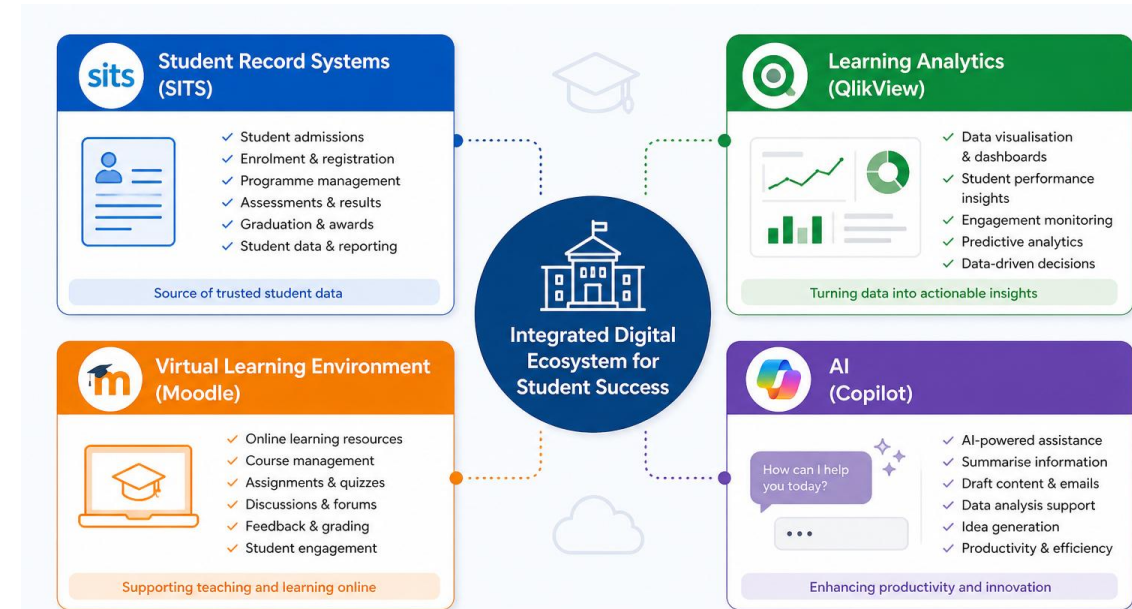
- **Digital education practice**

- Purpose

- ✓ To enable confident, ethical, and purposeful use of digital systems

- Focus areas

- ✓ Digital pedagogy strategy
    - ✓ Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)
    - ✓ Digital accessibility and inclusion
    - ✓ Student record systems (SITS, GradeLink)
    - ✓ AI literacy and responsible use (e.g., MS Copilot)
    - ✓ Learning analytics (QlikView, Power BI)



# Professional Development Framework

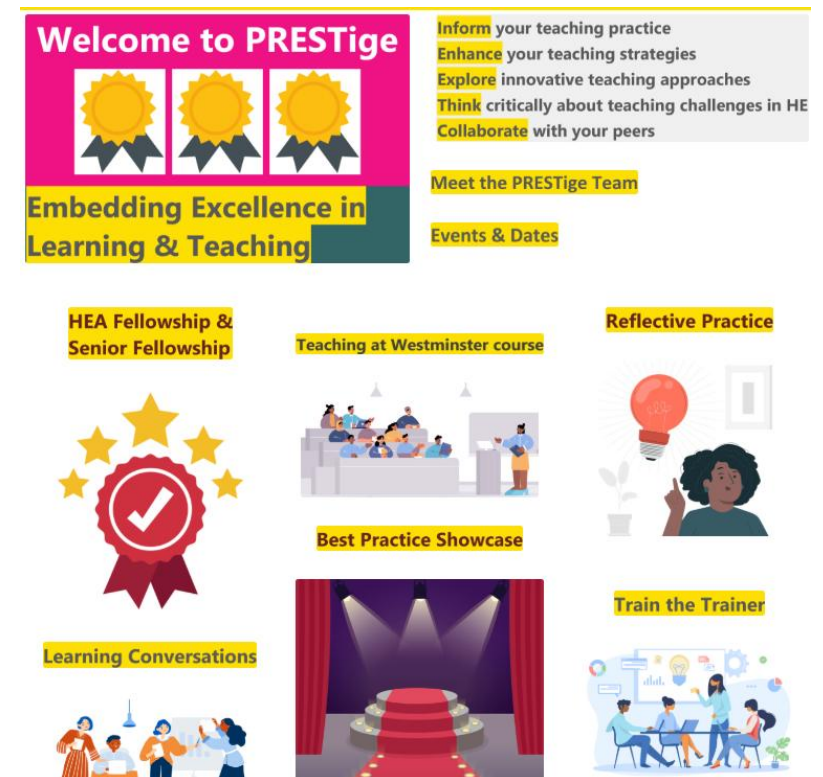
- **Academic leadership**

- Purpose

- ✓ To develop the capability to lead people, coordinate teaching teams, and drive curriculum and educational enhancement

- Focus areas

- ✓ Fellowship pathways
    - ✓ Workload and team management
    - ✓ Decision-making and problem-solving
    - ✓ Leading curriculum change
    - ✓ Team culture and wellbeing
    - ✓ Educational leadership programmes



# Professional Development Framework

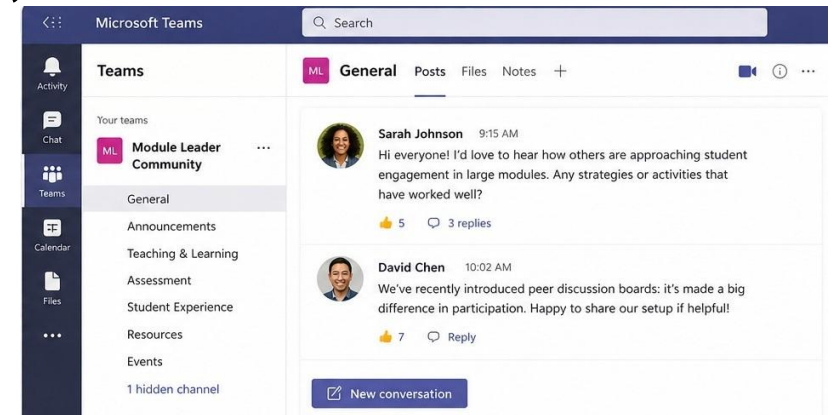
- **Scholarly community**

- Purpose

- ✓ To foster shared expertise, collaborative learning cultures, and contribute to the continuous enhancement of teaching and learning.

- Focus areas

- ✓ Scholarship of Teaching & Learning (SoTL)
    - ✓ Collective Problem-Solving
    - ✓ Knowledge Sharing and Dissemination
    - ✓ External networking and professional bodies (Advance HE, SEDA, discipline groups)
    - ✓ Formal Mechanisms
      - Mentoring schemes
      - Peer observation (shadowing, learning walks)
    - ✓ Informal Mechanisms
      - Shared digital spaces
      - Cross-module dialogue



# Professional Development Framework

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- **Continuous quality enhancement**

- Purpose

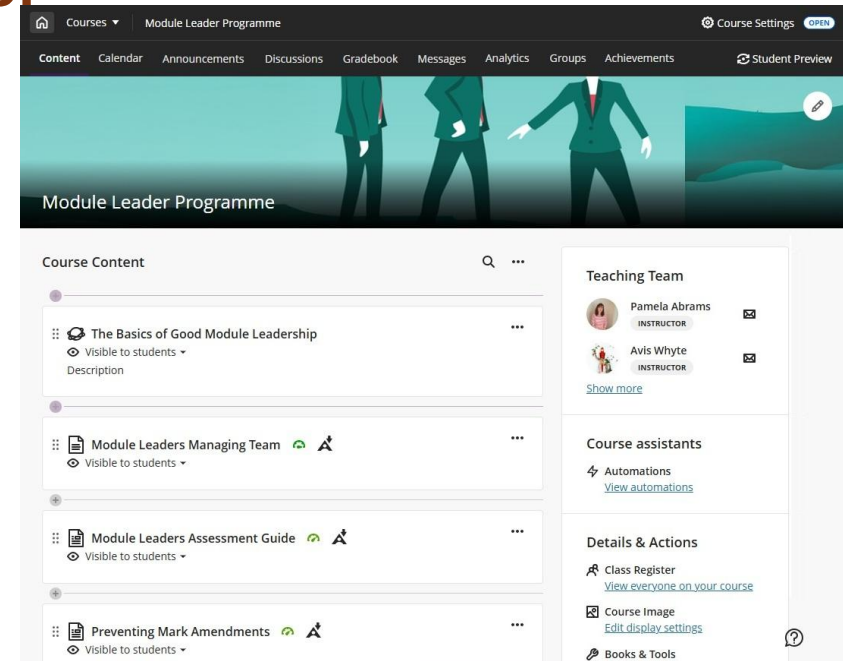
- ✓ To embed a culture of using evidence, reflection, and feedback to inform continuous improvement of teaching, assessment, and student experience.

- Focus areas

- ✓ Module evaluation
    - ✓ Assessment outcomes (grade distributions, progression)
    - ✓ Continuous Improvement Reports (CIR)
    - ✓ External examiner responses
    - ✓ Annual appraisals

# Recommendations

- **Resources accessible via website / intranet / VLE**
- **Module Leader Toolkit**
  - Module Leader handbook
  - Policy documents
  - Training resources
  - AI chatbot
- **Delivery modes**
  - Synchronous
    - ✓ On-campus and online workshops
  - Asynchronous
    - ✓ Short screencast tutorials
- **CPD recognition**
  - Micro-credentials / badges
- **Collaborative content steward / coordinator**
- **ML Forum**



# Conclusion

- **Effective CPD must be flexible, inclusive, and according to the context**
- **The framework has seven stages that reflect the full scope of module leadership**
- **Digital capability and AI literacy are core requirements**
- **Building a community of practice enables peer learning, shared standards, and collaborative problem-solving**
- **Continuous, data-informed improvement sustains teaching quality**

# References

- Advance HE (2023). Professional Standards Framework (PSF 2023). Advance HE.
- Briggs, S. (2026). How to integrate development pathways for higher education professionals. Times Higher Education.
- Spring, L. (2022). Practical application of the Information Seeking and Communication Model (ISCM) in Higher Education – Westminster Business School Module Leader Practice.  
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- Uzorka, A., Namara, S. & Olaniyan, A.O. (2023). Modern technology adoption and professional development of lecturers. Education and Information Technologies.

# Thanks

