

Professional recognition in Higher Education: institutional scholarship and academic development

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UK HE background and context

- No requirement to hold accredited teaching qualifications
- History of post-graduate certificates (non-compulsory depending on institutional preference)
- Academic development encompassing a “blurring of boundaries” (Whitchurch 2010:247)

Whitchurch, C. (2010) *The challenges of a diversifying workforce*. In: Gordon, G. and Whitchurch, C. eds. *Academic and Professional Identities in Higher Education*. Abingdon: Routledge, 245-255.

Certificated professional development: some perceptions

- Top-down compliance
- Quality assurance rather than quality enhancement
- Finite
- Positive impact on some participants, but may stifle wider dialogue about Scholarship of Teaching & learning (SoTL)
- Tensions between the duality of the academic identity

Recent shifts and developments

- Increasing evidence of impact evidence required for development programmes
- Introduction of Key Information Set (KIS)
- Introduction of student fees
 - student expectations
 - institutional accountability
- UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) – Higher Education Academy (HEA)

UKPSF Dimensions of practice

Areas of activity

- A1** Design and plan learning activities and/or programmes of study
- A2** Teach and/or support learning
- A3** Assess and give feedback to learners
- A4** Develop effective learning environments and approaches to student support and guidance
- A5** Engage in continuing professional development in subjects/disciplines and their pedagogy, incorporating research, scholarship and the evaluation of professional practices

Categories of Fellowship

- D1- Associate Fellowship
- D2 – Fellowship
- D3 – Senior Fellowship
- D4 – Principal Fellowship



Core knowledge

- K1** The subject material
- K2** Appropriate methods for teaching and learning in the subject area and at the level of the academic programme
- K3** How students learn, both generally and within their subject/disciplinary area(s)
- K4** The use and value of appropriate learning technologies
- K5** Methods of evaluating the effectiveness of teaching
- K6** The implications of quality assurance and quality enhancement for academic and professional practice with a particular focus on teaching

Professional value

- V1** Respect individual learners and learning communities
- V2** Promote participation in higher education and equality of opportunity for learners
- V3** Use evidence informed approaches and the outcomes from research, scholarship and continuing professional development
- V4** Acknowledge the wider context in which higher education operates recognising the implications for professional practice



Applications for Professional Recognition

- Direct written submission to the Higher Education Academy
- Devolved professional recognition scheme reflecting institutional ethos
- University of Ulster Professional Development Scheme (PDS) accredited by HEA January 2013
- <http://www.ulster.ac.uk/centrehep/pds/>

Benefits

- Institutional management and administration of the scheme (with HEA accreditation and oversight)
- Tailoring of process to reflect Ulster priorities
- Explicit demonstration of the University's commitment to recognising teaching and learning;
- Linkage of Fellowship categories with other internal recognition and reward processes;
- The capacity to support, guide and monitor the recognition process.

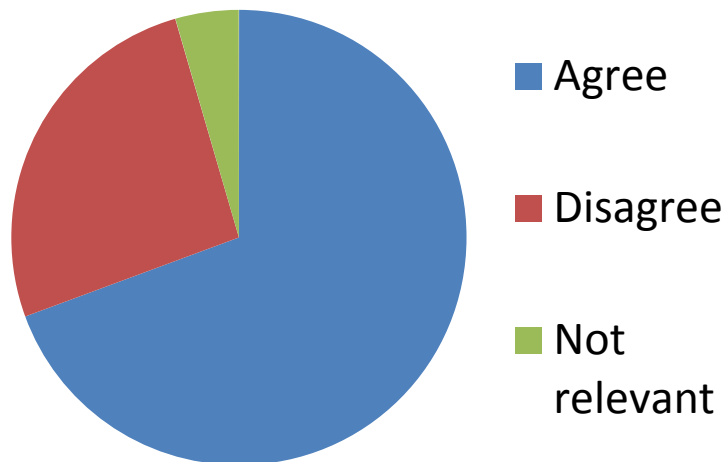
University of Ulster Learning & Teaching Strategy (2013-2018)

- *“To provide a supportive environment in which learning and teaching innovation and leadership are encouraged, recognised and rewarded for all in the University”*
 - To promote scholarly dialogue within and between communities of practice;
 - To formalise career paths and implement promotion and recognition procedures that value and reward the contributions made by staff to the development, support and leadership of teaching excellence;
 - To lead, encourage, support and disseminate scholarship of learning and teaching and pedagogic developments locally and nationally through the Centre for Higher Education Practice.

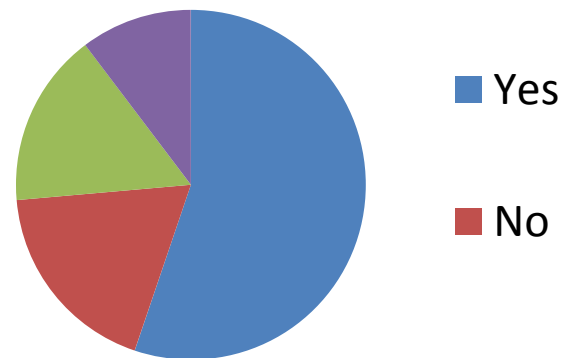
University of Ulster initial indicators (Big Conversations data: January 2013)

n=101

I find it difficult to make time to engage in CPD relating to my role.



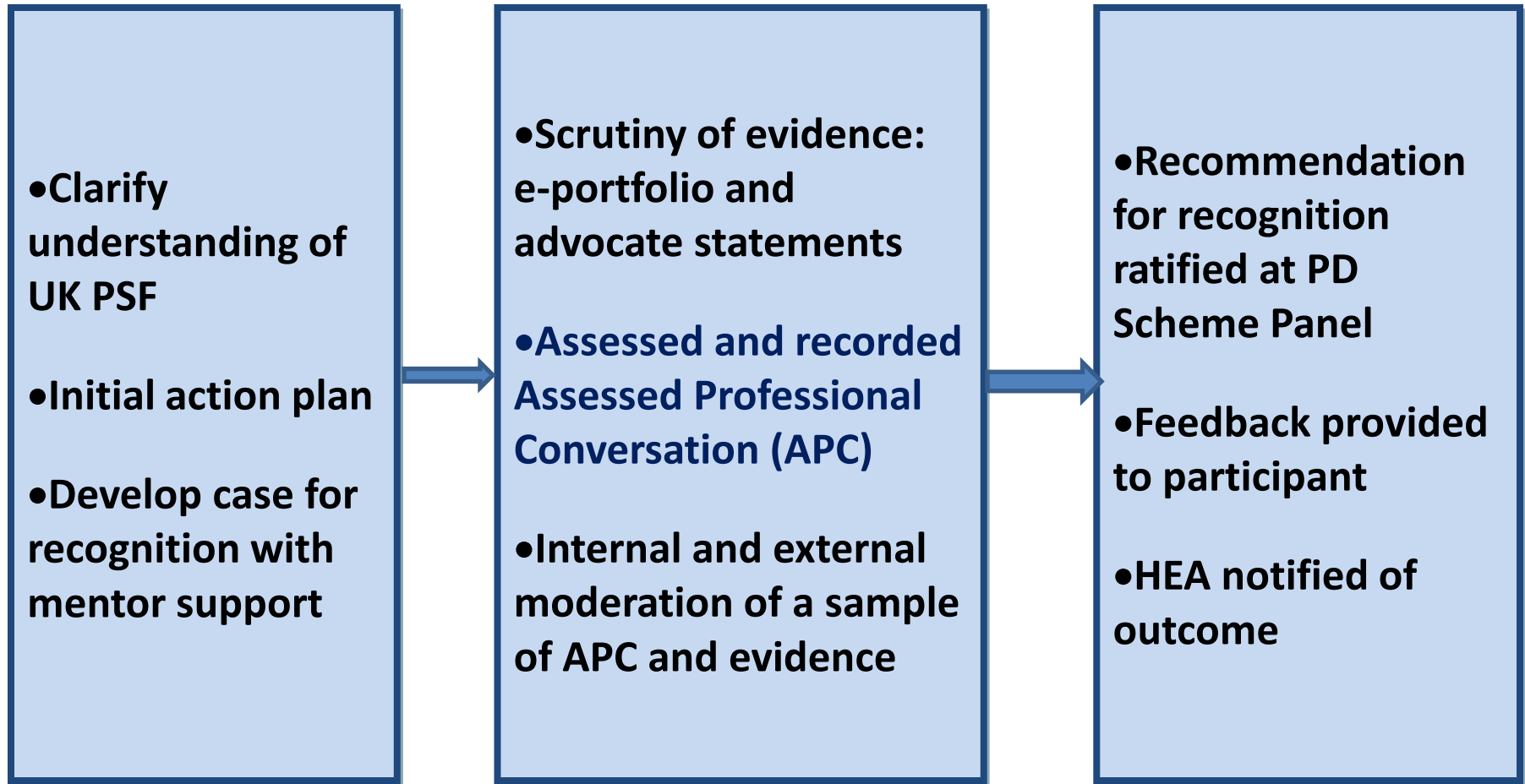
I'd welcome opportunities to gain formal recognition for effective practice in Teaching & Learning



"...there is a need to recognise the efforts of individuals regardless of how large or small their efforts are."

Route	D1	D2	D3	D4
Certificated option (accredited by the HEA)	One of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> First Steps (from 2010) PHE 701(from 2009) PHE 704(from 2009) 	PgCHEP (from 2009) PgCUT commenced after Sept 1997	Not available	Not available
Experiential option	Evidence of recent, effective practice aligned to D1 of the UK PSF assessed by PD Scheme	Evidence of recent, effective practice aligned to D2 of the UK PSF assessed by PD Scheme	Evidence of recent, effective practice aligned to D3 of the UK PSF assessed by PD Scheme	Evidence of recent, effective practice aligned to D4 of the UK PSF assessed by PD Scheme
Blended option	Not available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> alignment to D2 of the UK PSF assessed by PD Scheme demonstrated through evidence of recent, effective practice plus previously achieved D1 alignment to D2 of the UK PSF assessed by PD Scheme demonstrated through evidence of recent, effective practice plus certificated non-accredited learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> alignment to D3 of the UK PSF assessed by PD Scheme demonstrated through evidence of recent, effective practice plus previously achieved D1/D2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> alignment to D4 of the UK PSF assessed by PD Scheme demonstrated through evidence of recent, effective practice plus previously achieved D1/D2/D3
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;"> <p>University of Ulster Professional Development Scheme Routes</p> </div>				

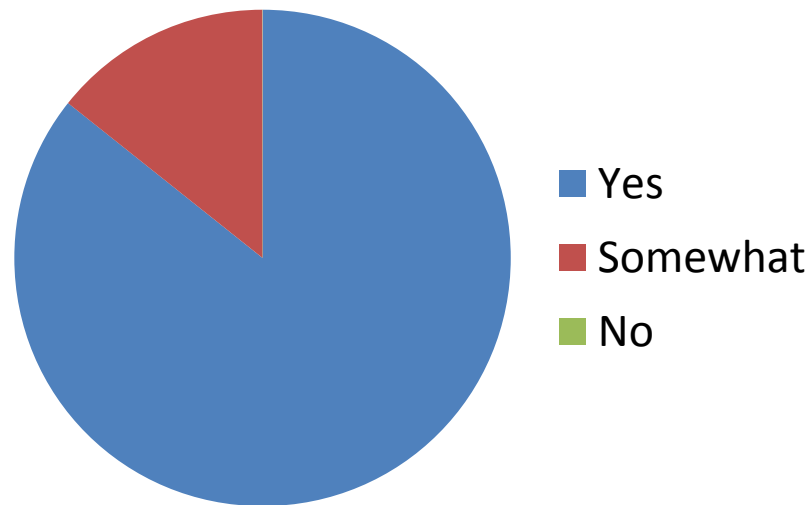
Experiential Application Format



Initial indications of success (PDS roll-out Sept 2013 – Jan 2014)

- I realised my experiences and background have facilitated me with a skillset which is comparable to those of colleagues across the sector. I'm less reluctant to look externally for recognition, and a bit more confident in my own ability and skills, than I was before I started on this scheme.
- Yes I think this was a worthwhile exercise as it made me think about role at the UU - it made me realise the important role I play in the students' learning' experience.
- Participation in the scheme has helped me to look beyond the institution to engage more with peers and with research on a wider scale.

Do you think your attitude to professional recognition in HE has changed as a result of participating in the PD Scheme?



Role of the academic developer: *blurring of boundaries revisited*

- growing shift from a culture of compliance to one of professionalism
 - Academic-related contract with academic role/responsibilities
 - “third space professional” (Whitchurch 2008): complementary rather than discreet
 - Shifting perceptions towards academic development – evidence and appreciation of shared professionalism
- It's an opportunity to gain recognition for your work in an informal and engaging setting, **led by staff who clearly know what they're talking about, and who I felt excelled at guiding me** from a cold start through to attaining Senior Fellowship.
 - **Very professional and skillful approach from staff.** Formal yet supportive.

Future directions...

UKPSF Impact Study (2013): top four areas in influencing institutional change:

- Shaping accredited courses
- Influencing institutional CPD
- Supporting reward & recognition
- Influencing institutional strategy & policy

Potential detractors:

- Key performance indicators (quality assurance measurements)
- Artificial indicators of teaching quality
- Compliance rather than culture shift

Window of opportunity...

carpe
diem.