This article should be read in conjunction with the article on ‘Initial Education for Academic Staff Working in Higher Education’ [1], as there is no clear division between initial education and continuing professional development for academic staff working in higher education (HE).

Continuing professional development (CPD) may include a wide range of activities, from short courses to higher degrees. There is no legal requirement for academic staff in HE to undertake professional development, though there is an expectation that they will do so.

**Organisational aspects**

A number of organisations and frameworks exist which support higher education institutions (HEIs) [2] and their academic staff in fulfilling the expectation to undertake professional development. See the subsections below for further information.

**Quality Code for Higher Education**

The expectation that academic staff in higher education will undertake professional development is expressed through the [Quality Code for Higher Education](https://qualitycode.qaa.ac.uk/) [3], produced by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA). Chapter B3 Learning and Teaching [4] refers to the expectation that:

> ‘Higher education providers articulate and systematically review and enhance the provision of learning opportunities and teaching practices’ (p. 8).

The expectation is supported by the following indicator of good practice:

> ‘Higher education providers assure themselves that everyone involved in teaching or supporting student learning is appropriately qualified, supported and developed’ (p. 15).

The indicator of good practice is illustrated as follows:

> ‘Once appointed, and throughout their career, staff engage with opportunities to develop and extend their teaching capabilities and to reflect upon their teaching practice. Staff are encouraged to value their own and others' skills, to recognise that they have a responsibility to identify their own development needs, and to engage in initial and continuing professional development activities. Higher education providers make
opportunities available for all those involved in teaching and supporting student learning to inform each other’s practice and professional development.

Continuing professional development activities made available by the higher education provider are planned strategically, including the allocation of sufficient resources to cover the needs of both research, and learning and teaching development. Protected staff time to engage in continuing professional development is identified and factored into workload considerations.

Higher education providers assure themselves of the effectiveness of their approach to staff development and support. Aspects considered may include any or all of the following: working with staff development teams; having online continuing professional development resources and modules for staff; and ensuring the availability of sufficient administrative support.

Higher education providers also have agreed procedures to identify staff in need of additional support to ensure their effectiveness, and provide them with opportunities (which the provider expects them to take up), support and mentoring to enable improvement of their skills and competency to an agreed level.

Individual staff members are able to access appropriate and timely support to develop inclusive forms of learning, teaching and assessment which are supported by technology. They are provided with guidance and support to understand the impact of considerations of equality and diversity on their roles, and have free access to information on creating an inclusive learning culture for which they have a shared responsibility with the higher education provider. Higher education providers also recognise the importance of digital literacy for staff and make available suitable development opportunities.

Higher education providers have in place transparent staff recognition and reward processes, and promotion opportunities for all career paths’ (pp. 15-16).

Note: A revised UK Quality Code [5] for higher education is under development. The Expectations and Practices of the Code were published in March 2018. The full Code, including the advice and guidance to help HEIs develop and maintain effective quality assurance practices, is scheduled for publication in November 2018.

SEDA Professional Development Framework (SEDA-PDF)

The SEDA Professional Development Framework (SEDA-PDF [6]) provides a set of standards which can be used to facilitate and support the design and delivery of initial and continuing education development programmes and activities within higher education institutions (HEIs) [2]. It provides recognition for HEIs, accreditation for their professional development programmes and recognition for the individuals who complete those programmes. The SEDA-PDF is owned by the Staff and Educational Development Association (SEDA) [7], the professional association for staff and educational developers in the UK. SEDA uses a range of named awards [8] to accredit different types of professional development within the PDF and also offers Fellowships [9] and courses [10] in supporting and leading educational change.

UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) H3
The UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) aims to support the initial and continuing professional development of staff engaged in teaching and in supporting learning. It is developed and managed on behalf of the higher education sector by the Higher Education Academy (HEA)*.

The UKPSF has two main components: Descriptors and Dimensions of Professional Practice. The Descriptors outline the key characteristics associated with four broad categories of typical teaching and learning support roles within higher education. The four Descriptors - labelled D1 to D4 - correspond to the HEA fellowship categories with D1 being Associate Fellow, D2 Fellow, D3 Senior Fellow and D4 Principal Fellow. The Dimensions of Professional Practice are:

- areas of activity undertaken by teachers and support staff
- core knowledge to carry out those activities at the appropriate level
- professional values that individuals performing these activities should exemplify.

An account of the development of the UKPSF as well as an overview of activities attempting to enhance the quality and professional status of teaching in higher education over the past three decades is provided by SEDA’s 2013 evaluation report Measuring the Impact of the UK Professional Standards Framework for Teaching and Supporting Learning [12].

The HEA [13]* offers accreditation for courses and wider professional development opportunities that support staff who teach and / or support learning. For individual staff, it offers professional recognition services, which are underpinned by the UKPSF. Professional recognition means that individual staff have completed accredited programmes or have a proven track record of experience within the UKPSF. They may apply to become an HEA Fellow on the following incremental scale:

- Associate Fellow (AFHEA) [14]
- Fellow (FHEA) [15]
- Senior Fellow (SFHEA) [16]
- Principal Fellow (PFHEA) [17]

For an overview of the professional development needs of holders of different academic roles, see this research commissioned by the HEA in 2014 to inform its support offer: Shifting Academic Careers: Implications for Enhancing Professionalism in Teaching and Supporting Learning [18].

*The HEA was originally established in 2003 as the national body for enhancing learning and teaching in higher education (HE). Initially funded by the four HE funding councils in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland, over time the balance of the HEA’s funding shifted increasingly to subscription from universities and colleges and income from other means such as consultancy. In 2016-17, it became entirely self-sufficient as its grant funding ended.

In March 2018, the HEA, the Equality Challenge Unit and the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education merged to form Advance HE [19], a single sector agency for equality and diversity, learning and teaching, and leadership and governance in higher education. The HEA Fellowship scheme described above will be unaffected by the merger. Advance HE has charitable status and will be funded by subscription from universities.

Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF)

In the May 2016 higher education White Paper, Success as a Knowledge Economy: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice [20], the Government committed to the introduction of a new system for recognising excellent teaching in higher education. The Higher Education and Research Act 2017 [21] provides the legislative basis for the Teaching Excellence and Student
Outcomes Framework (TEF), which assesses the quality of higher education institutions (HEIs) in terms of teaching and ensuring students get good outcomes. It operated for the first time in the 2016/17 academic year. From 2018/19, in England only, performance on the TEF will be linked to the level of fees that HEIs may charge students. HEIs in England with a TEF award will be able to charge a higher maximum tuition fee than those institutions without an award. For full details of how the TEF is intended to work, see the Office for Students (OfS) [22] website.

**Incentives for participation in continuing professional development (CPD) activities**

The provision of incentives to staff to participate in continuing professional development is a matter for individual higher education institutions (HEIs) [2].

In order to ensure that learning opportunities and teaching provided to students are of high quality, HEIs generally operate a structured system for identifying any professional development needs of staff, and monitoring whether they are met. These performance management systems therefore act as a driver for continuing professional development. Performance management processes involve the following four stages:

- planning and defining expectations and setting personal objectives
- implementation and action
- monitoring performance
- reviewing performance.

In addition, the Higher Education Academy (HEA) manages a National Teaching Fellowship Scheme (NTFS) [23], which rewards excellent learning and teaching with a financial award intended to be used to fund its recipients’ professional development in teaching and learning or aspects of pedagogy. In March 2018, the HEA, the Equality Challenge Unit and the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education merged to form Advance HE [19], a single sector agency for equality and diversity, learning and teaching, and leadership and governance in higher education. The NTFS will continue following the merger.

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https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/continuing-professional-development-academic-staff-working-higher-education-84_en

**Links**

[1] https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/initial-education-academic-staff-higher-education-85_en
[7] https://www.seda.ac.uk/
[8] https://www.seda.ac.uk/named-awards
[9] https://www.seda.ac.uk/fellowships
[13] https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/
[14] https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/individuals/fellowship/associate-fellow
[15] https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/individuals/fellowship/fellow
[16] https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/individuals/fellowship/senior-fellow
[17] https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/individuals/fellowship/principal-fellow
[18] https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/shifting-academic-careers-implications-enhancing-professionalism-teaching-and
[19] https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/
[23] https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/individuals/national-teaching-fellowship-scheme/NTF