

The UKPSF: How Did It All Begin?

- Why teaching matters?
- Teaching as a profession
- Teaching and quality graduates/employability
- Why continuing professional development (CPD)?
- Academic Integrity/Ethics
- Attributes of WU Lecturers (participants' activity)

It all started in the United Kingdom. Politics changed rather drastically in the early 2000's, with the rise of neoliberal ideology. Market ideology became dominant in political discourse and the running of government affairs. This perception happened along with government budget deficits and other financial pressures, leading to cuts in funding for government agencies, including universities. UK universities were under pressure from the government to look for funds themselves as government budget cuts became more severe.

Commodification of university education was deepened. Universities began to set higher fees for their service, largely to maintain the same level of operations, some simply to survive. As parents/students had to pay higher fees for their degrees, they were linking more closely between what they pay and the kind of education they get.

The language of what they are provided must be worth their money - "value for money" - emerged as dominant discourse in relation to higher education. Universities needed to "guarantee" their services in terms of education were of high value. Universities were forced to prove they could produce quality graduates, among others. Quantitative measurements of students learning became a norm. Teaching moved to the center of quality assurance; it became central to producing high quality graduates. Universities must now pay greater attention to students learning and how students learn, and whether they are made to acquire skills that are job-ready.

In other words, teaching has been moved to the center of the whole teaching and learning in higher education. Teaching matters! Teaching becomes a profession like others, such as those in health and engineering. Continuing professional development (CPD) became a norm. There emerged measures to give professional recognition to university lecturers. A teaching framework to "guarantee" teaching quality was conceived, with wide-ranging consultations in the higher education sector. Then in 2006, United Kingdom Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) was first launched. Further consultations and revisions were made, and in 2011 the current version was adopted. It is accepted that the UKPSF is now more adaptable to different contexts. It is now more organic and developmental. It is customizable, which explains why UKPSF is popular.

UKPSF is very important tool for universities to implement quality teaching policy in partnership with the British government's TEF (Teaching Excellence Framework). What needs to be emphasized is the fact that UKPSF is not only about teaching or subject areas competencies but it also about "professional values" of teachers, of which self-reflection - "to reflect one's own teaching practices" is essential. Of course, it is a kind of reflection what is done on a proven set of criteria of being a good teacher.

There are now 100,000 fellows around the world, in 27 countries. Half received their fellowship in the last five/six years.

--UK now requires early career lecturers to undergo UKPSF or other accredited training programs. Many universities in the UK have adopted as a part of promotion criteria for teaching and even support staff.

--300 program accredited, including mid-career ones.

--The impact of UKPSF has been enormous in the sense that it has changed the culture of learning and teaching at tertiary education institutions across the UK. It fosters a conversation on teaching and learning. It is important therefore for institutions to have mechanisms to encourage teaching excellence among staff.

--One of the key things that has to be done at institutions is to create "champions" for teaching, who then will have influence over others. Institutions need to build capacity.

--Need to be emphasized that it is about "categories" of fellowship, rather than "levels of fellowship".

UKPSF: THE THREE DIMENSIONS

It needs to be noted that UKPSF is a structure or skeleton that sets boundaries for virtually everything that constitutes "best practices" in teaching. It is broad enough to cover a wide range of practices considered good teaching and effective student learning.

It has three main dimensions: Areas of Activity, Core Knowledge, and Professional Values.

Areas of Activity = what we do as a teacher

Core Knowledge = all knowledge that we must have in order to do our job well - knowledge of subjects/course we teach, knowledge about methods of teaching, knowledge about our

students, etc.

Professional Values = our values/beliefs regarding respecting individual learners, values regarding equality of opportunity for learners, our beliefs that we need to rely on reliable data regarding whether our teaching is good enough, etc.

The summary in graphic form by Prof Dr Wichit Srisa-an captures very well the essence of the three dimensions- otherwise what constitutes good teaching.