

Recognising excellence in teaching and learning

Report from the consultation on the UK
Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) for
teaching and supporting learning in higher education

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Learning and teaching are at the heart of higher education. Since 2006 academics and other staff who support student learning have been able to benchmark their professional development against the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF), a national framework owned by the sector and developed and managed on its behalf by the Higher Education Academy.

The descriptors in the framework give confidence that people with a critical job to do, supporting students in their higher education, are prepared appropriately at each stage in their career.

The strengthened framework comes at a time when the expectations on teaching in higher education are greater than ever before. The Higher Education Academy appreciates the time and care that colleagues in the sector have put into updating the UKPSF. It provides a solid basis for the development of excellent teaching in higher education.

Professor Craig Mahoney
Chief Executive
Higher Education Academy

This report has been compiled on the basis of responses to the national consultation on the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF), which took place between November 2010 and January 2011. In addition to staff from across a broad range of higher education institutions and interest groups who contributed at various points to the review, I would like to thank the following HEA staff who supported specific aspects of the consultation, its analysis and writing up: Sally-Ann Brassington, Richard Brawn, Alex Buckley, Laura Hodsdon and Helen Thomas.

Professor Sue Law
Director: Academic Practice
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Executive summary

Introduction and background

1. Following the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) national consultation (available for reference at www.heacademy.ac.uk/ukpsf), which took place between November 2010 and January 2011, the Higher Education Academy (HEA) undertook a detailed review and analysis of the responses to each of the consultation questions.
2. The UKPSF was introduced in 2006, and at the time of the consultation had been in operation for five years. The 2011 review followed widespread agreement across the sector that, given the rapidly changing nature of higher education (HE) and the increasing emphasis on quality teaching and support for students' learning, some revisions to the UKPSF would be timely.
3. In developing the revised UKPSF, the HEA intended to:
 - acknowledge the sector-owned nature of the framework;
 - retain and build on specific aspects of the UKPSF that have been regarded as successful;
 - ensure that the framework caters for a wide range of staff whose responsibilities include teaching and/or support for the student learning experience and who seek national recognition;
 - contextualise any revisions to the UKPSF within the changing nature of UK HE. In particular, contextualise the increasing emphasis both on the quality of teaching and learning and on the continuing professional development for those who teach and/or support student learning.

Overview of responses

4. In total, 205 responses were received from across the sector. These comprised:
 - 90 from HE institutions;
 - 85 from individuals;
 - 30 from sector bodies and organisations.

5. All mission groups (as well as those who were non-affiliated) were represented in the consultation responses. Although not all respondents commented on all questions (or parts of a question), institutions often engaged comprehensively by providing detailed answers when they did respond. The overall profile of responses in terms of mission group affiliation is set out below:

| | | |
|----|---|----|
| 6. | 1994 Group | 10 |
| | Million+ | 18 |
| | Pre-1992 | 8 |
| | Post-1992 | 15 |
| | Russell Group | 16 |
| | Small and Specialist | 5 |
| | University Alliance | 18 |
| | Total number of institutional responses | 90 |

7. The majority of proposals gained support in principle from respondents, whether institutional or individual. However, in a number of cases, support was framed by reservations or recommendations for specific refinements or amendments to the detail of a given proposal.

8. In addition to specific responses to individual questions, respondents also raised a number of general questions and, in some key areas, registered their concerns. For example, the way in which some questions were framed (for example, what appeared to be an overly prescriptive tone in some questions) and the way they appeared to challenge the sector-owned nature of the framework led a number of respondents to seek clarification as to whether the HEA sought a regulatory rather than enhancement role. While the HEA was keen to use the consultation as a stimulus for debate across the sector about the future development of the framework, it did not intentionally set out to generate this impression and remains strongly committed to its enhancement role.

9. This report provides detail on each of the questions and, where appropriate, key points are summarised. Please note that a copy of the consultation document, which includes the questions asked and relevant appendices, can be found at www.heacademy.ac.uk/ukpsf. Feedback from respondents to the consultation highlighted the following points:

Question 1: Do you consider that the original aims of the UKPSF remain appropriate?

10. While 98% of respondents considered the original aims to be generally appropriate, 50% of them also recommended that there should be further refinement or additions. For example, a number emphasised that the aims needed to refer to teaching, and to acknowledge that teaching and learning take place within a wider academic (increasingly international) context. While the original core aims have been retained, they have also been refined to incorporate key issues raised by respondents.

Question 2: (a) Comment is invited on both the content and structure of the revised UKPSF (Standard Descriptors) in Appendix 1. (b) Comment is invited on the content and structure of the table in Appendix 2, which provides further underpinning detail regarding the Areas of Activity, Core Knowledge and Professional Values. (c) Comment is also invited on the shorter and refocused title of the framework.

11. *Content and Structure (Questions 2a and 2b):* Respondents broadly welcomed the proposed content and structural developments, with 62% and 56% of respondents being generally positive about parts (a) and (b) of this question, respectively. In particular, there was strong support for the alignment of Senior Fellowship with Standard Descriptor 3, a change seen as being long overdue.
12. Respondents also supported the introduction of Standard Descriptor 4 and the alignment of the Principal Fellowship with it. Although some were concerned that its focus tended to be on more senior staff, this development was seen by many as a productive way of encouraging those leading teaching and learning at a variety of levels to engage with the UKPSF and HEA Fellowship.
13. While there was overall support for the underpinning detail about typical roles/career stages and typical activities associated with different standard descriptors, it was recommended that this information should be provided as supplementary guidance and illustration. Respondents also suggested that particular attention be paid to ensuring that there is consistency of approach across all standard descriptors.

14. A number of respondents emphasised that in a rapidly changing HE context, the UKPSF needed to ensure it continued to cater for a broader range of staff (for example, those with support for learning and/or academic-related roles).
15. *Title (Question 2c):* While the intentions behind a shorter title were supported in principle by 45% of respondents, overall it was considered that it was best to retain the existing title.

Question 3: Comment is invited on the way in which the framework addresses the importance of recognising the integrated nature of academic roles and responsibilities, while maintaining a strong and central role for teaching and learning within the UKPSF.

16. While the imperative towards an academic practice focus was supported by 54% of respondents in principle, the need to retain a strong focus on teaching and learning was also emphasised strongly. However, it was also considered important that the UKPSF acknowledge the broader academic context within which HE staff work, for example through the provision of illustrative material and exemplars.

Question 4: Comment is invited on the proposed approach to initial training and professional development for external examining as part of the UKPSF.

17. While 49% of those commenting on this question adopted a generally positive stance, 31% disagreed – sometimes quite strongly. However, respondents considered it would be valuable to make explicit reference to external examiner activity in the framework because this was supportive of teaching and learning-related activity.
18. A number of respondents emphasised the importance of acknowledging both institutional responsibilities and the work of the UUK, GuildHE and QAA External Examining Review Group chaired by Dame Janet Finch. Respondents also valued the HEA's enhancement activity in support of external examiners and institutions (e.g. development materials, resources and events), and this was encouraged as part of a wider collaborative approach with other sector agencies.

Question 5: Comment is invited on the practical implications of introducing a formal requirement for subject/disciplinary-based support for (a) mentoring, (b) teaching observations, (c) discipline-focused module (or equivalent).

19. This question comprised three elements, as outlined below.
- a. *Mentoring (Question 5a)*: Although 69% of respondents were positive about mentoring as part of formal teaching qualifications, there was also concern about any regulatory emphasis and resourcing issues. However, there was strong support for exemplary material on effective mentoring practice to be incorporated into guidance materials that support the UKPSF.
 - b. *Teaching observation (Question 5b)*: Teaching observation was considered an important aspect of teaching qualifications by 71% of respondents. However, many also emphasised the value of peer observation and recommended that, rather than being a formally required element, observational elements should be highlighted in UKPSF support materials as good practice. A number of respondents were also assertive in arguing that the use of observation must remain a matter for institutions themselves to determine.
 - c. *Discipline-focused module (Question 5c)*: While discipline-focused work was considered important, 70% of respondents did not agree that there should be a compulsory discipline-focused module within formal teaching qualifications.

Question 6: Comment is invited on how far the guidance provided in the framework is appropriate regarding new and emerging technologies.

20. Nearly three-quarters (73%) of respondents supported, in principle, the view that the UKPSF should make reference to emerging technologies. However, disagreement over definition and terminology indicated that further discussion with sector representatives with expertise in this area would be beneficial before finalisation.

Question 7: Comment is invited on the location of the sustainability focus within 'global citizenship', one of the framework's professional values.

21. While respondents considered sustainability to be important as a concept, there was limited (38%) support for its inclusion as a professional value in the framework. A more inclusive and flexible core professional value was recommended because this would enable institutions to align it with their own missions and values.

Question 8: Comment is invited on the above proposals with particular reference to their feasibility within, for example, the current economic and HE policy climate.

22. While respondents considered that each of the four areas (see below) were valuable in their own right (with many noting that the elements are increasingly seen as emerging or existing good practice across the sector), it was felt that, overall, they should be emphasised as good practice rather than as Postgraduate Certificate programme requirements. There were, however, sometimes significant differences in responses to each of the elements, as indicated below.
 - a. *Probationary academic staff (Question 8i)*: Although there was strong support, in principle, for this proposal (with 70% of respondents agreeing), respondents mentioned a number of caveats and suggestions for refinement: for example, that the term 'probationary' should be replaced by 'new to teaching'.
 - b. *Postgraduates who teach (Question 8ii)*: Although the majority of respondents (58%) supported, in principle, the need for postgraduates who teach to be given appropriate training/development opportunities, it was also recommended that such components be left to institutional discretion.
 - c. *All staff with teaching responsibilities (Question 8iii)*: Although this proposal was strongly supported in principle (with 75% of respondents agreeing), concerns were raised about practical issues, including the potential of institutions to resource such developments.

- d. *Teaching observations for benchmarking capability (Question 8iv):* This proposal was not supported (with 33% of respondents agreeing in principle and 41% of respondents disagreeing) largely because of concerns about maintaining institutional autonomy and the resourcing/practical difficulties of implementing such a proposal.

Question 9: (a) Comment is invited on the potential use of anonymised information about HE teaching staff qualifications and fellowships. (b) Are there any potential benefits and/or drawbacks that you would identify?

23. There was strong support in principle for transparency of public information in relation to teaching qualifications and fellowships with 66% of all respondents (and, similarly, 66% of institutions) supporting this in principle. While perceived benefits included the enhanced status of HE teaching and the scope for internal as well as sector-wide benchmarking, respondents also raised several key concerns (e.g. data reliability, the need for inclusiveness in terms of qualifications, the dangers of league tables etc).

Question 10: Comment is invited on the potential for greater collaboration regarding professional standards related to teaching between the HEA and other professional bodies/associations.

24. There was strong support (89% of respondents) for collaboration between the HEA and relevant professional bodies in relation to the alignment of standards providing this was limited, targeted and not overly resource-intensive.

Question 11: Comment is invited on the revisions to the framework regarding the standard descriptors, including the introduction of Standard Descriptor 4: Principal Fellowship.

25. There was relatively strong support in principle (64%) for the revisions to the framework, particularly regarding the introduction of Standard Descriptor 4. The extension to the 'professional pathway' was particularly welcomed through the clearer framework, which was seen as enhancing support for continuing professional development. Concerns tended to cluster around the use of specific terms and the importance of inclusiveness across all standard descriptors.

Question 12: Comment is invited in relation to: (a) the appropriateness of the potential criteria/indicators outlined in Appendix 4 and the degree to which these reflect the focus adopted within individual institutions, (b) the appropriateness of the likely sources of evidence outlined in Appendix 4 and their potential value within individual institutions, and (c) possible approaches to ‘populating’ the various career stages (i.e. how far any of the evidence sources might be seen within individual institutions as ‘essential’ or ‘desirable’ for particular career points).

26. This question comprised three elements (although the majority of respondents tended to provide their overall comments in addressing the first element).
- a. *Criteria (Question 12a)*: Responses to this question were broadly positive, with 66% of respondents agreeing, in principle, that the criteria outlined have potential value to institutions in developing their own criteria. It was also noted that they were potentially helpful for individuals seeking promotion. Respondents also noted that the criteria are ultimately best determined by individual institutions.
 - b. *Sources of evidence (Question 12b)*: Responses to this element were positive (75% in principle support; only 18% negative), with an acknowledgement that such information is potentially useful as a reference point for both individuals and institutions; the importance of institutional autonomy and individual circumstance was also emphasised.
 - c. *Career stages (Question 12c)*: This question attracted relatively few responses in comparison with parts (a) and (b); 45% of respondents were negative, while 38% were positive in principle. Although respondents thought it was helpful for criteria to be explicit, a number also emphasised that this is an area where institutions have autonomy and need to retain flexibility.

Conclusion

27. Following the national consultation and analysis of responses, the HEA further refined and revised the proposed framework. This has, in turn, been subjected to further discussion and soundings with interested parties and representative groups from across the sector. This has led to the development of the final version of the UKPSF. The final stage in its development is the request for endorsement from relevant funders and sector-wide bodies (HEFCE, HEFCW, DELNI, SFC, UUK, GuildHE) as well as the support of NUS.
28. The HEA considers that the revised UKPSF will:
- provide a strengthened focus on developing teaching excellence within an academic practice context, while maintaining and building on core aspects of the original framework;
 - acknowledge the wider range of teaching and learning support responsibilities undertaken by staff in HE;
 - articulate and demonstrate a more comprehensive progression pathway through, for example, the introduction of ‘Principal Fellowship’, which is relevant to more experienced staff;
 - facilitate the fuller alignment of professional recognition with each of the four descriptors, for example through the alignment of ‘Senior Fellowship’ with the UKPSF;
 - focus on the development of excellence in ‘teaching’ as well as ‘support for learning’;
 - demonstrate its fitness for purpose in the context of ongoing changes and challenges facing HE institutions and their staff and students.
29. Operational changes made to the 2011 UKPSF comprise:
- a change to the framework’s nomenclature from ‘standard descriptor’ to ‘descriptor’;
 - an expansion in the number of descriptors from three to four (the introduction of Descriptor 4 facilitates the further professional development of staff and articulates a clearer progression pathway);
 - clearer information about typical career stages and the kinds of evidence

that enable individuals to demonstrate their achievements in relation to the descriptors;

- the development of framework guidance notes (FGN) (currently under development). These will provide individuals and institutions with further detail and explanatory guidance on specific aspects of the framework, and offer exemplars of good practice from across the sector to support further innovation and development.

³⁰. The following changes are related to the HEA's fellowship categories:

- a change in the nomenclature from 'Associate' to 'Associate Fellow', which is, as before, aligned with Descriptor 1;
- the alignment of 'Fellow' with Descriptor 2, as before;
- the alignment of 'Senior Fellow' with Descriptor 3;
- the alignment of 'Principal Fellow' with Descriptor 4.

The UK Professional Standards Framework consultation 2011

A. Introduction and background

This report presents the outcomes of the UK-wide consultation on the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF), which was undertaken by the Higher Education Academy (HEA) between November 2010 and January 2011. The consultation outlined proposals for the review and further development of the UKPSF and, following its completion, the HEA undertook a detailed review and analysis of the responses to each of the consultation questions. These are set out in the body of this report.

The original UKPSF was introduced in 2006; at the time of the consultation, it had been in operation for five years. The 2011 review followed widespread agreement across the sector that review and revision of the framework would be timely, particularly in light of the rapidly changing nature of higher education (HE) and the increased emphasis on teaching quality, value for money and support for student learning.

The consultation provided an important opportunity for the HEA to investigate sector-wide views on the original framework and to gauge perceptions about the potential future role of the framework as a key aspect in the enhancement of teaching quality in HE.

While this report provides a summary analysis of responses to each question and incorporates some statistical profiles, it is important to note that the consultation questions were qualitative in nature. Consequently, the analysis provides only an overarching picture of responses and does not claim the kind of precision of analysis that more quantitatively focused questions would generate. Instead, the report provides a broad, general picture of the profile of perspectives on each question.

Overview of responses

The UKPSF consultation process invited individuals working in the sector – all UK HE institutions as well as a wide range of related organisations – to comment on a variety of proposed changes and developments. The consultation was also open to others who wished to provide comment. In total, 205 responses were received from across the sector. These comprised:

- 90 from HE institutions;
- 85 from individuals;
- 30 from sector bodies and organisations.

All mission groups (as well as those who were non-affiliated) were represented in the consultation responses. Although not all respondents commented on all questions (or parts of a question), institutions often engaged comprehensively by providing detailed answers when they did respond. The overall profile of responses in terms of mission group affiliation is set out below:

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|---|----|
| 1994 Group | 10 |
| Million+ | 18 |
| Pre-1992 | 8 |
| Post-1992 | 15 |
| Russell Group | 16 |
| Small and Specialist | 5 |
| University Alliance | 18 |
| Total number of institutional responses | 90 |

Sector-wide organisations that responded included HEFCE, HEFCW, SFC, Universities Scotland, QAA, QAA Scotland, JISC, NUS, UCEA, UCU, ALDinHE, AoME, AURIL, HEDG, HEDW and SEDA. The full list of institutional and organisational respondents is listed in Annex A.

Overall, respondents provided a substantial amount of both general and detailed comment on the consultation questions. While this required equally extensive analysis, the level of detail provided has enabled the HEA to publish the proposed revised version of the framework in the knowledge that it has been able to take account of a wide range of feedback, recommendations and advice from across a diverse and changing sector.

This report provides both extracts from and an overview analysis of the range of responses to the various issues and questions raised in the consultation document. Each section endeavours to set out the main issues raised by respondents and where quotations from specific HE institutions are included, they are generally identified by the relevant mission group.

Although the majority of proposals gained support in principle this was, in a number of cases, framed by reservations that were often recommendations for

refinement or amendment to the detail of the proposal. A number of overarching themes and issues ran through some of the responses. For example, some questions were regarded as controversial by a number of respondents, largely because of what they considered to be an overly prescriptive tone in some places.

Although the HEA was keen to provoke discussion and highlight key issues of debate about what is becoming an increasingly important aspect of HE, it did not intentionally set out to provoke disquiet among HE institutions. The HEA acknowledges the importance of institutional autonomy and recognises that the UKPSF is a sector-owned framework. It is also important to note that despite concerns, a significant number of the proposed changes generated positive and (sometimes very strong) support in principle.

A perceived strength of the current framework has been its flexibility and adaptability to institutional procedures. There have, however, also been longstanding requests to the HEA for both changes to the framework and additional guidance about specific aspects. Because the consultation document itself contained a significant amount of exemplary and illustrative material in appendices, some respondents argued that if they were integrated into the framework document itself this might inhibit its ease of use.

Consequently, in line with consultation feedback (and, indeed, with the HEA's original intention), only essential detail will be provided in the framework. Supplementary information and additional guidance will be located in framework guidance notes (FGN), designed to incorporate good practice exemplary materials and explanatory notes – all of which could be updated regularly in response to changing sector needs and practice.

In addition to publishing guidance notes, the HEA is currently undertaking a review of its accreditation and individual recognition services to ensure that they (a) are congruent with the revised framework and (b) retain sector-wide confidence that they enhance institutional use of the framework.

B. The aims: Question 1

In a changing HE context, respondents were asked to comment on the question: “Do you consider that the original aims of the UKPSF remain?” (Question 1). A very significant number of respondents (165 out of 169 respondents, 98%) gave a broad endorsement to the current aims. Importantly, however, half of these respondents also registered a number of caveats or recommended that the aims should be refined further.

Positive feedback about the aims included the views that [they are] “viewed by many as offering a really useful tool to scaffold learning and teaching development” (University Alliance) and “talk to both staff and student perspectives” (University Alliance). In addition, the fact that “the PSF is intended as an enabling mechanism, owned by the sector” (Russell Group) was seen as important. Other positive comments included:

“[They] remain appropriate, particularly in their ability to provide a shared language and understanding of the core knowledge, activities and professional values that underpin engagement in teaching and supporting learning.”
(ALDinHE)

“Overall, the PSF has proved to be a useful tool for benchmarking standards across the sector and in providing evidence to the outside world that learning and teaching are taken seriously, and for these reasons the original aims remain appropriate.” (1994 Group)

“[The aims] remain appropriate, especially in light of recent UK developments, e.g. the Browne Review.” (Million+)

A key concern that was widely shared by respondents related to the need to foreground ‘teaching’ rather than just provide a statement about ‘support for learning’, as the original UKPSF articulated:

“Yes the broad aims of the UKPSF remain appropriate to this university. Given the history of this development through Dearing and the 2003 and 2004 white papers regarding the establishment of ‘standards for teachers’, we note there is no specific reference to teaching in the aims.” (Million+)

“The aims were written in a context where HEA had focused its own strategy on student learning; given the recent HEA review of its own role to support teachers, the use of ‘teaching’ in the aims would be sensible.” (Higher Education Development Group)

“Though the terminology of ‘supporting student learning’ appropriately fits with a healthy focus on student-centred learning, at XXXX we also continue to embrace straightforwardly teaching competency and would be equally happy with the use of the term ‘teaching’ in the generic aims.” (1994 Group)

“it would be helpful to see reference to ‘teaching.’” (Russell Group)

“... the standards do not provide any criteria for what ‘good’ teaching ... looks like.” (Small and Specialist)

Respondents also felt that the framework and its aims needed to be flexible and reflect the diversity of institutional need: *“we appreciate the flexibility that the format adopted”* (Russell Group); *“any shift towards using the framework in a more regulatory role would not be welcome”* (Russell Group). Some respondents also suggested that the aims should make reference to the rapidly changing HE context and different institutional missions:

“The original aims of the UKPSF remain appropriate and are supported by the university. However, to be meaningful and gain academic credibility, the aims need to be effected in a way that reflects the individual institution’s mission.” (Russell Group)

“The original aims of the UKPSF may no longer be relevant in the new context of HE ... [they should be] ... revised to better reflect the current and potential role of the UKPSF in recognising and accrediting the professional development of higher education teachers and others who support learning (e.g. study skills support, learning resources, ICT support staff).” (HEFCE)

Seven respondents (four institutions and three individuals) recommended that there should be reference to the national recognition of teaching, while others wanted to see specific reference to enhancement and the international context in which UKHE

increasingly works. The UKPSF's role in supporting mobility and the portability of qualifications was also seen as important by some:

“Given references in the documentation to the importance of international recognition and global citizenship, it would be helpful to make reference to the international context within which universities work ... Supporting mobility in higher education between countries would be an attractive benefit for engaging with the standards.” (Million+)

“More fundamentally, the framework does not adequately articulate its scope in the context of the widespread internationalisation of UK HE. Put another way, is UKPSF a ‘standard for teaching in the UK ... or of the UK HE student learning experience (UK brand) wherever it is delivered (online, overseas, blended) by whoever is delivering it on behalf of UK HEIs ... ?’ (1994 Group)

“The aims do not refer to the benefit of achieving portability of qualifications between institutions, although this is potentially a major advantage.” (Russell Group)

“One omission from the original aims relates to the recognition of staff performance and promotion.” (Pre-1992)

“Finally, the aims do not reference the important role the framework has to play in relation to gaining national recognition for teaching-related provision offered in individual HEIs. We propose therefore the inclusion of an additional aim focusing on this area.” (1994 Group)

Some respondents called for clearer congruence between the aims and the professional standards themselves. For example:

“Aim 2 mentions creativity and innovation but these do not seem to be explicitly reflected in any other descriptions, criteria, standards of the revised framework.” (University Alliance)

“Aim 3 [should refer to] the professionalism that an organisation brings to the support of the student learning experience. We also recommend removal of the reference to consistency in the fourth aim as consistency of learning experience is

not desirable as it would not reflect the diversity of the sector.” (Russell Group)

*“The original aims of the UKPSF remain appropriate. However, the aims do not explicitly recognise the role that the framework plays in accrediting PG Cert (HE) programmes and perhaps this should be made more explicit.”
(University Alliance)*

*“Perhaps explicit reference should additionally be made to the fact that the framework is used to accredit awards that are nationally (internationally?) recognised, and provides a mechanism to set ‘standards’ across the sector.”
(1994 Group)*

Other comments echo points made in response to other consultation questions, including about the role of the UKPSF vis-à-vis continuing professional development (CPD) and the ways in which academic practice might best be reflected in the aims (see section F in this report).

While most respondents considered the original aims of the UKPSF to be generally appropriate, a significant number recommended further refinement. As a consequence, the aims have been revised to better reflect and emphasise what was seen as a broad consensus about:

- the sector-owned nature of the UKPSF and its role as an enabling mechanism;
- the diversity of institutional missions, academic settings and learning contexts (including international settings) in which teaching and learning takes place;
- the variety of approaches adopted in relation to HE teaching and learning;
- the fact that there is no single model of HE teaching and learning;
- the fact that teaching and learning takes place within a variety of academic contexts and that staff often have multiple roles including, for example, research and management responsibilities;
- the importance of teaching as well as learning support, and their quality enhancement in HE;
- the view that both initial and CPD have a role in developing professional approaches to teaching and learning;
- the diversity of staff involved in teaching and supporting learning;
- the diversity of learners and the dynamic nature of the learning experience within HE.

C. Content and structure: Question 2a

Question 2a asked respondents to comment on the overall changes in content and structure of the revised UKPSF, with particular reference to developments regarding the standard descriptors as a whole. (NB Question 11 also asked respondents to comment on the proposed changes to the standard descriptors, with specific emphasis on the introduction of a fourth standard descriptor – Principal Fellow). We received 171 responses to Question 2a, with 85 responses coming from HE institutions, 22 from sector-wide organisations and 64 from individual respondents.

Of those who commented, 62% adopted a generally positive perspective on the proposals, with 30% of the total offering unqualified support in principle. Only 13% of responses were negative. The remaining 32% were positive but offered recommendations or suggestions for refinement or amendment. The remaining 25% of respondents took a balanced or generally neutral perspective and the overall analysis showed a relatively similar spread of responses from across institutions in terms of mission group affiliation.

While the majority of institutions were positive about both the principle and the overall focus of the proposed changes, some expressed reservations about specific details or suggested possible changes. For example, nine out of the 14 Russell Group institutions who commented specifically on this question adopted an overall positive approach, while four were negative. One took an overall neutral stance. Six of the eight 1994 Group institutions who commented specifically on this question were positive overall, with the remaining two being neutral/balanced. Fourteen Million+ institutions offered positive overall comment; two were negative and three offered balanced/neutral comment. Five GuildHE institutions responded to this question, four of whom were positive overall, with one neutral/balanced.

Those who offered often very positive comments referred explicitly to the opportunities for clearer progression that the revised structure provided. This included support for the alignment of Standard Descriptor 3 with ‘Senior Fellowship’; all parts of the sector considered this alignment timely, long overdue and necessary. The introduction of Standard Descriptor 4, aligned with ‘Principal Fellowship’, was also very much welcomed:

“It is helpful to have a more concrete framework than the current Standard Descriptor 3, which is unhelpful at the moment. The new structure is much more helpful and the content more useful.” (1994 Group)

“The revisions to the standard descriptors should help institutions to provide clearer progression and career enhancement routes for those with responsibility for teaching in higher education.” (HEFCE)

“Revised content and structure looks reasonable provided the ‘typical activities’ do not become prescriptive. Also, institutions will need to know what guidance will be offered re. [the] appropriate amount and level of evidence. (We know that there are differing practices across the sector!)” (Million+)

“We welcome the introduction of the Principal Fellow category. It was vital to link standards with fellowship categories and this has been done. This is a real improvement. The structure now makes sense.” (Post-1992)

“We welcome the revised structure to the PSF as this provides better alignment between the standards and the various ‘titles’. However, we consider that this could go further to more explicitly provide recognition for initial and continuing professional development...” (GuildHE)

“Re. Standard 4: As a new standard this is interesting since it attempts to recognise particularly strategic influence. It acknowledges that there are positions where the responsibility to influence sector/institutional practice is significant. There are some concerns over the equality of SD 4 for staff in some HEIs and some role profiles.” (Russell Group)

Eleven respondents also explicitly emphasised their support for the revised framework’s increased emphasis on CPD and career enhancement opportunities, which was seen as offering scope for ‘aspiration’:

“The move to four levels of standard descriptors is supported because it will offer recognition for continuing professional development on the one hand and for leadership of teaching on the other.” (Russell Group)

“It appears to provide enhanced clarity between the different levels of the PSF and an individual’s career development.” (University Alliance)

“Greater emphasis in the framework on continuous career enhancement beyond the initial stages is very welcome, as is the addition of the Standard Descriptor 4: Principal Fellow level. Advancement to Senior Fellow should now be more achievable for a greater number of academic staff who might previously have seen this as an aspiration for only ‘the great and the good.’” (Million+)

“[It] maps to a more complete career pathway than previously.” (University Alliance)

A good many respondents also emphasised the way in which the revised structure offered greater clarity – a comment often contrasted with the structure introduced through the initial 2006 framework:

“We find these a significant improvement – much clearer and much more helpful, in particular the revision of the recognition categories into four clearer, more distinct areas.” (University Alliance)

“These are clearer and the addition of a fourth standard will certainly encourage senior tutors in smaller institutions to apply for the third standard.” (GuildHE)

“The content and structure of the Standard Descriptors is much improved compared with the 2006 iteration” (1994 Group)

Both the principle and the detail – including, for example, the introduction of ‘Typical role/career stage’ and ‘Typical activities’ – were welcomed by a substantial number of respondents:

“The additional detail and separation of membership into four rather than three levels is helpful in terms of framing CPD goals for staff and recognising developing expertise in teaching and the management of teaching. Also the four levels can be used to emphasise that professional developing in teaching is an ongoing process and not just a one-off training at the start of a career.” (Small and Specialist)

“It is a logical structure and maps to a more complete career pathway than previously. The Principal category is a sensible addition. It will be a useful framework for new and existing staff... The categories ‘Description’ and ‘Typical role/career stage’ are well laid out and generally useful. The structure of the revised descriptors is good and it is clear to see what is required and inclusion of typical activities is very useful.” (University Alliance)

“The column setting out ‘typical activities’ is a useful addition that helps to differentiate further the levels within the standards.” (Small and Specialist)

However, various respondents also suggested that some of the detail about, for example, role and career stages was *“in danger of being excessive and complex”* (1994 Group) and would be *“too cumbersome and detailed”* (Individual) if incorporated into the framework itself. However, it was seen as being highly beneficial if it was provided as illustrative material in further guidance and a valuable addition for institutions, which could then interpret the standards within their own academic and professional settings:

“A lot of information regarding ‘typical activities’ could be relegated to guidance rather than occupying space and attention in the high-level document, which should remain focused on the standards themselves.” (University Alliance)

“The proposed addition of typical role/career stage and typical activities would make the standards much too complex and prescriptive. The added detail must be seen as illustrative only and not a requirement and it should be made clear that institutions remain free to apply the standards in relation to their own context and need.” (Russell Group)

Although the majority of respondents welcomed the four standard descriptors and revised structure, there were differences of view (including within mission groups) as to the potential benefits of what some called a hierarchy of standard descriptors from 1 through to 4. While many welcomed this, others did not: it was felt that an additional standard descriptor focusing on strategic leadership and management of learning and teaching might create the impression of a linear rather than diverse approach to career development:

“[They] appear to provide enhanced clarity between the different levels of PSF and an individual’s career development.” (University Alliance)

“In our view, the standards should be hierarchical in nature with each higher level understood to incorporate the descriptors for the previous level or levels.” (Russell Group)

“[It] maps to a more complete career pathway than previously.” (University Alliance)

“[There should be no] assumptions that career progression happens in a linear way.” (Russell Group)

“The new fellowship descriptors ... imply a hierarchical progression ... This is a limited view of professional development in HE which does not fully recognise the diversity of career paths and backgrounds of staff engaging in teaching and learning.” (ALDinHE)

Some considered the proposed configuration of Standard Descriptor 4 to be indicative of a move away from a teaching and learning focus, stemming from a view that Standard Descriptor 4 is framed in terms of position, role and/or job descriptions. While the opportunity to link HEA Fellowship categories and Standard Descriptors was supported in principle, 19 respondents thought the consultation document gave too much primacy to Academy Fellowship categories over standard descriptors and emphasised the value of flexibility. Twenty-one respondents questioned whether the framework would be sufficiently inclusive of those not working in traditional academic roles (e.g. support staff), a point also raised by some in response to other questions.

Overall, it was clear that the proposed revisions to the framework’s structure were largely welcomed by most respondents (albeit with a number of recommended refinements), with some aspects gaining particularly strong endorsement. Aspects that were particularly welcomed included: the proposed capacity to align Senior Fellowship with Standard Descriptor 3; the overall proposal to introduce Standard Descriptor 4; and the potential for alignment between Standard Descriptor 4 and Principal Fellowship. The ability of the revised framework to offer greater clarity and support career enhancement and CPD in

HE was also very much welcomed, as was, in principle, the introduction of further guidance notes that would focus on providing supporting information on typical roles/career stages.

Although respondents welcomed the potential for alignment, some indicated reservations about the relationship of alignment between the standard descriptors and Fellowship categories. While the HEA had not proposed an automatic linkage, it retains an ongoing commitment to providing opportunities for institutions and individuals to use the potential for alignment between the framework and associated Fellowship categories in ways that are beneficial for professional development, recognition and reward. The revised framework articulates and reflects this approach.

D. Areas of Activity, Core Knowledge and Professional Values: Question 2b

Question 2b invited comment on the content and structure of the proposals regarding the dimensions of the framework (i.e. the areas of activity, core knowledge and professional values), as outlined in Appendix 2 of the consultation document. Of the 136 responses received to this question, 56% were positive overall with only 15% taking a negative stance. Of those who were positive, 26% (36 respondents) endorsed the changes overall, with the remaining 30% (41 respondents) being positive in principle but expressing some reservations and/or recommendations. Twenty-nine per cent (39 respondents) took a neutral or balanced stance on the changes.

Positive comments included the view that the revised content and detail as set out in Appendix 2 of the consultation document represented an improvement on the previous format; that it built well on the initial framework; and that it emphasised the centrality of learning and teaching within the framework as well as setting out more explicitly those areas that need to be addressed by those using it. Negative views tended to focus around concerns that incorporating Appendix 2 into the framework would make it overly detailed and/or prescriptive in tone; and that some specific features in the original framework were in danger of being lost. Many of the points made in response to this question replicated those made to the previous part of this question (2a).

Respondents who took a positive stance felt that:

“This appendix of the review sets out well the key standard areas that we, as professionals, should be addressing. Having something like this in place will give HE lecturers some form of guidance as to what is expected of them. I find that it is a very important exercise to reflect on what I have been teaching...” (Individual)

“This appears to provide an improvement on the previous format, with the additional detail and examples being helpful when trying to explain the framework to colleagues. This will enable those new to the PSF, and considering a direct application to HEA, to translate their work more easily.” (University Alliance)

“The new framework builds well upon the existing framework and the addition of indicative evidence is very welcome.” (Million+)

“The increased level of detail is welcomed and supports the criteria-based approach to probation and the use of portfolios in appraisal at XXXX. Greater emphasis should be made in the professional values section on developing and applying pedagogy at discipline level.” (1994 Group)

“I heartily welcome these documents as they clearly focus on learning and teaching as central to any work within HE and provide useful guidance for any HEI to draw up their own policies.” (Individual)

“We welcome the integration of the previous Area of Activity 5 (Integration of scholarship, research and professional activity with teaching and supporting learning) into all other areas of activity in the new UKPSF. In our experience, the separation of this activity in the previous UKPSF did lead to a tendency to separate teaching practice from engagement with scholarly and research-based knowledge. The new wording will encourage a reconsideration of the role of such knowledge in professional development provision such as PG Certs.” (Russell Group)

Negative comments tended to cluster around first the view that the revisions were too detailed, and second the opinion that some of the terminology should be revised (illustrating the concern about prescription). For example:

“The prescriptive turns of phrase – should and must – and the levels of detail employed in the Appendix 2 tables are not likely to be deemed appropriate by university academics, and the somewhat ‘box-ticking’ nature of these criteria is unlikely to find favour or acceptance both among sceptical academics and among those appointed to conduct professional development activities with them.” (Pre-1992)

“As currently worded, this table is too prescriptive and taken with some of the language used is likely to make it difficult for academic staff to connect with the points being made. If column 2 is to be retained, it should better read ‘might include’, rather than ‘should include’. The material in the additional detail needs to be presented as illustrative, not as a requirement: examples of Areas of Activity would be useful, but the present obligatory lists will not work for all individuals as the types of activities listed will not be open to all individuals at any one institution in any given subject.” (Russell Group)

“The phrase ‘could include’ or ‘might include’ would be more suitable.” (Million+)

“We agree that these tables provide a reasonable overview of the variety of teaching and learning activities performed by academics. However, it is important to note that not all academics will perform all of the described activities in all of these areas (and should not be expected to). We recommend that staff should define their targets within their institution/team, based on their experience and opportunities and the educational needs of their students. As a more general comment, we suggest that the descriptors are too long and prescriptive and in many areas the language is opaque.” (Russell Group)

A number of responses to this question raised further concern about the inclusion of -sustainability as a core value (an issue addressed specifically in the section of the consultation document on Question 7). Although many accepted, in principle, that sustainability is important, a number were unconvinced about giving it a privileged position as a professional value. Others suggested that merging Area of Activity 5 (research and scholarship) with Area of Activity 6 (evaluation and quality assurance) diminished the clarity of the original framework, with the resulting concern that this might undermine the importance of both. Some suggested that relatively small-scale amendments of detail in the areas of activity and core knowledge could diminish the UKPSF's focus on CPD and suggested that the balance between depth and breadth should be considered further. This point also resonated with some comments made about the framework's accessibility and inclusiveness for the wider HE community.

Seven respondents thought that, regarding CPD, progression between the descriptors would benefit from being articulated more clearly; several suggested that the provision of examples of progression would be helpful. In addition, a number thought the criteria and evidence cited for the different levels related more to the types of *academics* who should undertake the level, rather than the progression from one level to another for differing groups of staff involved with teaching and supporting learning.

In light of feedback received on this and related questions, the HEA took the view that, in terms of their overall approach, the proposals were appropriate but would benefit from further refinement. For example, while the level of detail provided in Appendix 2 of the consultation document was largely welcomed in principle, the HEA acknowledged the need to include it in supplementary information rather than the framework itself. Steps have also been taken to ensure that the detail is provided as part of the FGN.

E. The title: Question 2c

In Question 2c, the consultation also asked whether a shortened title (the ‘UK Professional Standards Framework for Higher Education’) would be more appropriate than the current one (‘UK Professional Standards Framework for Teaching and Supporting Learning in Higher Education’).

Sixty-three out of the 141 respondents to this question (45% of those who commented) expressed general, in principle, agreement with the idea of a shorter and refocused title. Although a significant number did not see the change as particularly problematic, others expressed reservations and articulated caveats, including recommending further amendments of varying kinds. Although the majority of respondents (55%; n = 77) did not agree with the proposed change of title, views on this question were not particularly polarised according to mission group but were spread relatively evenly.

Those who supported the idea of using a shorter and more focused title overall offered a range of views, including the opinion that *“it is not only more succinct, but also allows for the wider focus on academic practice”* (University Alliance) and the idea that *“the shortened, refocused title is an improvement: it is important that the title still refers to teaching and learning or academic practice in some way”* (Russell Group). Other comments included:

“While we recognise that a more succinct title is desirable, we feel that the strength of the UKPSF is its strong and central role for teaching and learning and that this should be reflected in the title.” (1994 Group)

“We record a range of views. For some this is fine: there are no strong feelings and shorter is better. For others it is suggested that the focus of the document on learning and teaching should be reflected in the title.” (Russell Group)

“[We] would support the notion of a shorter and refocused title but only if it accurately reflects the nature of the standards.” (HEDG)

Other suggestions included the comment that the term ‘UK Professional Standards Framework’ itself is *“... far too broad, potentially including professional standards for lawyers, doctors, chartered accountants, and so on”* (Russell Group) as well as the view that *“there is really very little mention of the standards to be attained, so it is very much a professional development framework and not a standards framework”* (Million+).

A number of respondents argued that the term ‘academic practice’ would be appropriate, but only if this focus could be appropriately reflected in the content of the framework itself: *“The new title for the framework, omitting teaching and supporting learning, is appropriate given the notion of academic practice that is discussed in the paper. However ... academic practice is not reflected well enough in the aims of the framework”* (Russell Group). However, the key issue – raised by 43 respondents – specifically emphasised a concern over the lack of reference to ‘teaching and learning’ in the revised title. For example:

“Our view is that any new title needs to retain the current reference to teaching and supporting learning as this is what the framework is primarily about.”
(1994 Group)

“While a shorter title might have benefits it would not be clear without some addition of teaching and learning or academic practice what the framework refers to and so a longer title is needed.” (Pre-1992)

“Surely as the key focus is to emphasise and support the development of high-quality teaching in HE, then it should remain in the title.” (Million+)

“The implications of removing the phrase ‘for teaching and supporting learning’ can now be read as meaning that this framework covers all areas of professional academic practice, including research. This is not our understanding of the remit of the HEA.” (Pre-1992)

While a shorter title was considered desirable by a significant number of respondents, the proposed solution was rejected by the majority for various reasons but predominantly because it did not reflect the key focus of the Professional Standards Framework on teaching and learning. Consequently, the original title has been retained. Because a significant number of respondents were also keen to ensure that the framework (and its title) acknowledged that teaching and learning take place within a broader academic context (a view reflected in the answers to a number of questions), this point has been addressed in the revised framework. The HEA remains committed to ensuring that while a strong and central focus on teaching and learning is retained, the revised framework also acknowledges the value in emphasising that these activities take place within a broader academic practice environment.

F. Academic practice: Question 3

Question 3 sought views on the way in which the framework should address the importance of acknowledging the overall integrated nature of academic roles and responsibilities, while maintaining a strong and central role for teaching and learning within the UKPSF. We received 160 responses to this question: 87 (54% of those who commented) were either positive or broadly positive about the way in which the proposals addressed the integrated nature of academic roles/responsibilities, while 31 respondents (19% of those commenting) took a balanced or neutral perspective.

Only a quarter of respondents (41 responses, 26% of those commenting) expressed some negativity in response to this question, with their comments largely focusing on specific and detailed points. It was clear that, overall, more than twice as many respondents were in favour of the general principle that the integrated nature of academic work should be acknowledged more clearly within the UKPSF. There was a similar spread of responses across mission groups in terms of comment on this question. The value in recognising the integrated nature of academic roles and responsibilities was reflected in comments like these:

“[The proposal] reflects the reality of many academic careers, and challenges the view that teaching and research can be regarded as ‘opposite’ or alternative approaches within this.” (Million+)

“We are pleased to see that the HEA recognises the complex and integrative nature of academic roles.” (Universities Scotland)

“The approach used is appropriate, as it introduces these broader concepts while retaining the focus of the UKPSF on teaching and learning.” (Russell Group)

“We welcome the reinforcement of the integration between roles and responsibilities. These appeared to be artificially separated in the earlier version of the PSF.” (University Alliance)

“The new framework ... acknowledges some of the wider roles of academics that may have an impact on their teaching, support of learning and assessment.” (GuildHE)

“Notwithstanding our comments about the level of detail in the revised framework, we consider that it does make much clearer the fact that the majority of academics at all levels are engaged in a range of activity including teaching and learning.” (1994 Group)

“The thought which has gone into seeking to make the framework flexible is to be commended.” (University Alliance)

It is clear that responses indicate a variety of interpretations as to what may be understood by the term ‘academic practice’, such as: research; research-informed or -led teaching; knowledge transfer; enterprise; leadership and management; professional practice; and community engagement.

Five respondents pointed out that academic practice is a complex term with no agreed definition, while two suggested that it would be helpful if a clearer articulation of its meaning could be provided. In addition, thirteen respondents suggested that the framework needed to incorporate a stronger focus on learning support as well as academic roles, while seven queried the capacity of the framework to address the issue of multiple academic roles:

“Buy-in from academics would be enhanced if recognition of the full scope of the academic professional roles were acknowledged.” (Post-1992)

“Research-intensive institutions such as XXXX find the notion of academic practice approach appropriate to their mission. The revised, quadripartite version of academic practice developed in para.5.1 is helpful in supplementing the conventional model with an ‘enterprise’ strand but the widening of the standard further needs to be considered ... The notion of academic practice needs more work before it will be the ‘joined up’ approach referred to in para 2.5 and which would have purchase among individual academics.” (1994 Group)

“The revised framework goes some way in recognising the integrated nature of academic roles and responsibilities. Likely roles are identified against the fellowship descriptor; however, there is a large variation between the experience, responsibilities and status between the roles, particularly at the Associate Fellow and Fellow levels.” (Million+)

“... The framework’s recognition of other aspects of academic activity is a step forward. The lack of acknowledgement of this in the current approach is something which we found frustrating when applying for accreditation of our New Academics Programme.” (Russell Group)

“This has been a consistent criticism of the previous framework and it is important that the range of academic roles is recognised. The field has led the HEA in this respect, in that increasing numbers of institutions have a researcher-development-type module on their PG Certs in LTHE. Good that the framework is also acknowledging this reality of academic work – it is not all about the student experience.” (Post-1992)

“The recognition of the integrated nature of academic roles and responsibilities is welcomed, as is the inclusion of other relevant professional areas (for example, librarians, learning technologists). Perhaps this could be considered at levels other than at ‘Associate’ level?” (Russell Group)

The most common concerns and recommendations clustered around a view that the framework needed to go further than the consultation if it was to fully recognise a wider range of academic roles. For example, 20 respondents commented that the proposals (in terms of the aims, descriptors, areas of activity, etc) did not, at present, match the intentions to encompass wider aspects of academic work. The second most common concern was that teaching and learning needed to remain as a central focus within the framework. Although not necessarily rejecting the idea that academic context is important and should be reflected in the revised framework, nineteen respondents pointed out that *“the PSF is still focused on the learning and teaching agenda and we think it should be so”* (Pre-1992). Six institutional responses stated explicitly that recognition of wider academic roles needed to be more prominent across the framework, particularly in Standard Descriptors 1 and 2: *“within the new framework the extension to academic practice seems to be missing in SD1 and SD2”* (Russell Group).

Although 17 respondents wanted more detail regarding wider roles not related directly to learning and teaching, five institutions called for greater detail about wider roles related directly to learning and teaching: *“The current framework does not adequately recognise the integrated role of the tutor/lecturer, and we consider that this could be strengthened further in the revised framework”* (GuildHE). Fourteen respondents (among them HEFCE) argued for a stronger emphasis on knowledge transfer and related

activities: *“third-stream or highly applied research activity does not feature significantly”* (Russell Group).

While there was a general acknowledgement of the importance of an integration of teaching and research, seven respondents argued explicitly that the framework needed to place a greater emphasis on the relationship between teaching and research, while two institutions called for explicit mention of research supervision:

“The university would welcome explicit reference to ... research-led teaching in the descriptors.” (1994 Group)

“More could be said on research-enhanced practice and practice-led research.” (NUS)

“We strongly recommend ... that specific references should be added to include research supervision as a form of learning and teaching in higher education.” (Russell Group)

Responses to this question demonstrated overall strong support for acknowledging that teaching and learning take place within a broader context of academic practice. In order to ensure coherence and in light of the profile of responses, the revisions to the framework endeavoured to ensure that the focus on teaching and learning is retained while clearly acknowledging that there is sector-wide support for foregrounding the broader context and changing nature of academic and academic-related roles. Answers to this question resonated with responses to Question 10, which focused on collaboration regarding teaching standards between the HEA and other professional bodies/associations. In addition, responses also emphasised how the impact of changes in the HE landscape and the evolving nature of both academic and academic-related roles also suggested a growing need for the framework to address a wider range of staff needs in relation to teaching and supporting learning – a concern the HEA recognises as increasingly important.

G. External examining: Question 4

The consultation invited comment about initial training and professional development in relation to external examining. Question 4 explored views on two particular aspects: firstly, a proposal to embed stages of external examiner development into the UKPSF; and secondly, a proposal that the HEA should develop guidance that supports institutions in training external examiners.

We received 162 responses to this question, with 49% (80 respondents) providing a positive overall perspective. Of these 80, just over half (41 respondents, 25% of those who commented) gave clear support in principle to the proposals. Thirty-nine (24% of respondents) were positive but offered caveats or suggestions for revision, while a further 31% of those commenting (50 respondents) held views about the proposals that were sometimes quite strongly negative. This group included nine Russell Group institutions. The remainder (32 respondents, 20% of those who commented) provided either balanced or neutral comment, taking no particular stance on the question.

Positive comments included:

“The proposed approach to initial training and development for external examining is largely welcomed ... We particularly welcome the suggestion that recognising and rewarding external examining duties constitutes good practice.”
(Russell Group)

“The engineering council welcomes proposals in relation to external examiner training and development, and in particular any activity that leads to improved consistency across the sector.” (Engineering Council)

“We agree with the proposals and recognise the proposal’s significance ... To date, there is the sense that an academic’s decision to act as an external examiner is essentially a private choice and matter. We believe that this attitude should be challenged, but the challenges of achieving change are considerable.” (QAA)

A number of positive responses welcomed the potential increase in recognition that involvement in external examiner activity is likely to attract if recognised as an important aspect of an academic’s teaching and learning role. Other positive

comments stressed the value of having sector-wide guidance in relation to professional development. Overall, the emphasis on professional development and training gained support when it was interpreted as the HEA providing development materials upon which institutions could draw: *“it would certainly be useful if the HEA did provide a core of development material which individual HEIs could use when developing staff in this area”* (Million+).

However, in terms of negative comment, 16 respondents (comprising ten HE institutions, three organisations and three individuals) argued that external examiner training and development was not part of the HEA’s and UKPSF’s remit but should reside with institutions themselves: *“we believe the responsibility for the external examiner system should continue to rest with individual institutions”* (Million+). Five respondents pointed to the UUK/GuildHE/QAA review of external examining as the most appropriate avenue for reviewing practice in this area and expressed concern about the tenor of the consultation question: *“We are concerned and surprised at the document’s reference to external examining given that the national review in this area has not yet published its report”* (Russell Group). While the UUK, GuildHE and QAA Review of External Examining Arrangements discussion paper (July 2010) acknowledged the autonomy of individual institutions, it also suggested that external examiner training might best be undertaken through a common core programme and template for induction and training.

Other respondents suggested that external examining matters were addressed most appropriately through the QAA’s Code of Practice: *“[We] would remind the HEA that the external examiner system, including training, is covered by Section 4 of the Code of Practice and adherence is audited by the QAA”* (1994 Group). QAA itself suggested that *“the UKPSF could reference more clearly the UK Code of Practice for standards, quality and enhancement in higher education”*.

Twenty-three respondents stated that the responsibility for external examiner development and training should lie with the external examiner’s own institution or with the institution where they examined: *“primary responsibility for the training of external examiners should remain with the host [client] institution”* (Million+). Nine respondents cited the lack of consistency of external examination practices and the importance of local context as reasons for mitigation against a more standardised approach, while eight felt that the HEA’s role should be to provide guidance and recommendations about content for training and development: *“We welcome professional development for external examiners and this approach may be particularly welcome for international staff”* (University Alliance).

The proposal relating to knowledge about external examining (Stage I introduction – all new academic staff, as part of their initial professional development, should be required to undertake a brief but specific induction about the nature of external examining) as outlined in the consultation document attracted less negative comment than other elements in this question, although seven respondents commented that the induction period was too early in an academic's career to introduce issues related to external examining. It was also suggested by some that the approach was unnecessary because not all academic staff undertake external examining: *“The specific mention of external examining is inappropriate, as it is not relevant to all members of staff”* (Russell Group). A further five respondents sought clarification between the detail in the proposed descriptors and the three stages of external examiner development.

The importance of external examining as an activity within academic practice *per se* and the value of professional development to support it were strongly endorsed in the responses. Both institutions and sector bodies also indicated clear support for the HEA's enhancement role, including the value of recognising external examining within with UKPSF as activities that can enhance the quality of teaching.

However, there are also some key messages in responses about the need for the HEA to work more closely with UUK, GuildHE and other bodies and agencies, in particular QAA; respondents also noted the work undertaken by the Review of External Examining Arrangements in the UK. At a time of increased economic constraint, it is clearly important that agencies work collaboratively and in complementary ways to ensure that a robust framework for the development and standards of external examiners is fully maintained and enhanced.

H. Disciplinary expertise: Question 5

Question 5 comprised several elements. It invited comment on the practical implications of introducing a formal requirement for subject/disciplinary-based support for (i) mentoring, (ii) teaching observations and (iii) a discipline-focused module or its equivalent.

Ninety-six respondents commented on this question as a whole. In addition, various respondents offered specific comment on one or more of the three elements. For example, the question relating to mentoring attracted 69 specific responses; teaching observations attracted 66 responses; and the discipline-focused module (or equivalent) attracted 90 responses. While 55% of responses were broadly positive about the question (overall, 16% were positive without reservation; 39% were positive but with further recommendations or caveats), 38% of institutional responses expressed negative views on the question as a whole.

In undertaking the review of consultation responses, it was important to explore the reasons behind the negativity – many of which stemmed from concerns about potential formal requirements. For example, while many respondents recognised the real or potential value of all three elements (albeit with some caveats around specific detail), there were clearly concerns about any possibility for compulsion. Examples of in principle, supportive comment about the potential benefits of discipline-focused work included:

“In principle we welcome an increased emphasis on disciplinary aspects of teaching, though we have concerns about the methods proposed for doing so ... Though we support the HEA’s intention [in relation to a discipline-specific teaching module], we would warn against being too prescriptive and emphasise the need for the revised framework not to increase the burden on HEIs at a time of financial stringency and the need to achieve greater efficiencies.”
(Russell Group)

“This seems an excellent idea. As a practitioner and someone involved with a number of national and local initiatives and CPD-type activities, the common complaint about generic HE teaching courses is their generic nature and lack of subject relevance.” (Individual)

“XXXX’s PG Cert, in common with many other similar programmes, is designed to ensure that academic staff undertaking it are able to tailor

their learning activities and outputs to the pedagogical approaches and requirements of their own discipline. This is achieved through the statement of learning outcomes, student-managed learning and flexible modes of assessment.” (University Alliance)

“We believe this is appropriate and reflects good practice. Inclusion of formal mentoring, teaching observations and discipline-specific pedagogy within this area are seen as good practice.” (Post-1992)

“The University offers mentoring and requires peer observation by disciplinary colleagues under its probationary procedures, and there is a strong disciplinary focus to its initial professional development programmes. While XXXX then already meets the disciplinary criteria, this is because, as an institution, it has decided that this is appropriate for its staff. The University believes that such decisions should be made by institutions themselves and not by the HEA.” (1994 Group)

However, there was also discussion about the nature of disciplinary work. Thirty-nine respondents questioned whether a disciplinary approach to professional development is necessarily preferred to a generic one that also incorporates a disciplinary element: *“academics on our cross-disciplinary programme value the opportunities for cross-disciplinary discussion and find it to be one of the best aspects of the programmes” (Russell Group)*. One institutional respondent also specifically distinguished between discipline-specific pedagogies and discipline-specific cultures: *“we do not consider that there are discipline-specific pedagogies (rather that there are discipline-specific cultures)” (GuildHE)*.

Twelve respondents raised the issue about defining ‘disciplinary’ and the questions this would raise in the implementation of this proposal overall:

“There are aspects of teaching physical chemistry which are fundamentally different from teaching organic chemistry – it is not clear at what level the disciplines would be defined.” (1994 Group)

“The use of subject/disciplinary terminology may be rather too constricting here, not least as many staff work in fields of teaching and research that are multi- or trans-disciplinary.” (Million+)

a. Mentoring

The proposal for a formal mentoring requirement attracted 69 responses: 66% came from HE institutions, 17% from sector-wide organisations and 17% from individuals. Of the responses 69% were broadly positive, with many respondents commenting that this was already common practice in many institutions. Twenty-nine per cent were negative (again, these respondents mainly comprised institutions that rejected the notion of compulsion).

Those who disagreed with the mentoring proposal did so predominantly on two grounds: firstly, because of concerns about regulation; and secondly, because of possible staffing/resource issues (a particular issue for small and specialist institutions, for example):

“There are major resource implications for HEIs in introducing additional discipline-based support at a time when teaching resources are being significantly squeezed.” (1994 Group)

“We agree that this is desirable but it is difficult to make this a requirement if there is institutional variation in the recognition of workloads for the role ... it may be difficult to allocate mentors in some disciplines.” (Million+)

“Would need to be factored into work load models – would require shift of resources. There are resource implications in these proposals.” (University Alliance)

“We are also interested in any evidence base supporting the assumption that discipline-specific mentoring would be the most effective form of mentoring. It may be the most politically palatable one, but that is hardly the same.” (1994 Group)

“The proposals are unhelpfully prescriptive for a UK professional standards framework and limit the ways in which we seek to develop staff and professionalism.” (Million+)

A significant number of respondents acknowledged that mentoring and teaching observations constituted elements of good practice that are already and increasingly widespread across the sector:

“This is already fairly common practice across the sector and should be both desirable and practical in most contexts, but it should not be made a formal requirement.” (University Alliance)

“New academic staff are mentored within their schools plus have access to the PGCHE School Liaison Officer so this would not be an addition to current practice.” (Russell Group)

b. Teaching observation

The proposal for a formal requirement in relation to teaching observation elicited 76 specific responses, 71% of which (54 respondents) commented positively overall (albeit with some caveats or reservations in the case of 36 respondents; these reservations focused predominantly on the issue of compulsion). Although teaching observation *per se* was valued, as with mentoring, the notion of creating a formal requirement was not popular. Of the 51 institutions who commented specifically on the teaching observation proposal, 12 were positive without reservation, 22 were positive but with caveats, 14 were negative and three were neutral/balanced. Nine of the 11 sector-wide organisations that commented specifically on teaching observations adopted a broadly positive perspective, as did 11 of the 14 individual respondents who made specific comments.

Even where they agreed with the proposal, some respondents suggested that teaching observation was too narrow a term and did not take account of the full range of teaching-related activities that contribute to effective teaching (including, for example, peer observation, personal tutorials and support, materials development, etc). Others suggested that the proposal needed to take greater account of research in the area:

“While this is good practice and is commonplace, it is based on a model that the member of staff is a teacher in a conventional setting. We have a policy of peer development, which may include but does not require peer observation. For example, what is meant by peer observation for someone employed to support students learning on a purely online programme?” (Russell Group)

“Teaching observations – already in place at our institutions as part of probation, but more critically departments have established peer observation schemes involving all teaching staff. In line with current research, the HEA should

consider a more dynamic and developmental approach such as peer-review of teaching. Critically, this supports continuing professional development and the sharing of effective practice and is in line with the UK PSF.” (1994 Group)

Eighteen respondents also drew attention to differences between teaching observation within probation and teaching observation for development: *“While we fully support the principle of teaching observation and have a process of peer observation of teaching in place, we would not want to be too prescriptive in relation to the observation of probationary academic staff” (1994 Group)*. As with mentoring, objections tended to focus on concerns about prescription. Answers to this question had links with the element in Question 8 (qualified to teach), which sought comment on whether teaching observation should become a benchmark of teaching capability within all HE teaching qualification programmes for staff with teaching responsibilities and should be read in conjunction with that section of this report.

c. **Discipline-specific module**

The proposal that a discipline-specific module should become a requirement elicited a significant number of negative responses. Ninety respondents commented on this specific question (60 of them HE institutions), with 70% of all those commenting and 75% of institutions (spread across all mission groups) expressing a negative view. This proposal was considered to be overly prescriptive and too resource-intensive in terms of the practicalities of delivery:

“Separate modules for each disciplinary area are unrealistic, particularly in small institutions like ours.” (University Alliance)

“Insistence on the formal requirement for a module focused on the participant’s home discipline overlooks the way that disciplinaryity is addressed in PG Cert programmes. Participants are encouraged to surface and critique disciplinary assumptions during discussion with colleagues, and assessed work is located in their disciplinary (and other) context(s). The wording of this section seems to be rather prescriptive.” (Russell Group)

“... Discipline-specific modules create mental silos and are a retrograde step.” (Pre-1992)

Forty-six of those commenting argued that any requirement in this area would (i) limit the scope for staff development and professionalism, and (ii) undermine institutional autonomy and opportunities to develop provision appropriate to mission, context and staff profile:

“We do not believe the UKPSF should seek to prescribe how institutions (and other providers) develop academics’ discipline-based teaching expertise.” (HEFCE)

“It is important that the HEA maintains the distinction between the ‘what’ and the ‘how’ of professional development. Standards can define the ‘what’, but the processes of professional development should in general be left to professional discretion in institutions.” (SCAP)

“Not only would we need to develop, approve and offer modules within each discipline we teach ... we would also be obliged to run these modules every year in order for participants to complete their PG Cert.” (Million+)

“Clearly the subject/discipline aspect should be part of a PG Cert course, and this is widespread across the sector. However, many programmes deal with this by permeation rather than by addressing it with a specific module. Institutions will wish to retain flexibility in this area.” (Russell Group)

“One of the regularly and strongly reported strengths of our programme is the way that it brings staff from different disciplines together to learn with and from each other. This is highly valued and we want to continue with these practices.” (University Alliance)

Responses to this question demonstrate a clear recognition of the value of including discipline-focused work in initial and professional development programmes, including Postgraduate Certificates. For example, a good many respondents suggested that, while a discipline-focused perspective is important and could readily figure as an element in programmes, there are potential benefits in a balanced and complementary relationship between a generic approach that underpins the cross-discipline fertilisations of disciplinary-based ideas and practices.

While respondents accepted that discipline-specific work can be delivered in a variety of ways, the approach to delivery was seen as a decision for individual

institutions themselves, with the introduction of formal requirements being seen as unhelpful and inappropriate. Responses indicated that, overall, discipline-based work is valued and that both mentoring and the observation of teaching (taking account of a variety of modes) are increasingly commonplace and regarded as good practice in supporting professional development and disciplinary expertise.

I. New and emerging technologies: Question 6

Question 6, which invited comment on how far guidance provided in the revised framework was appropriate regarding new and emerging technologies, attracted a large number of broadly positive responses: 73% (119) of the 163 responses provided either a positive or broadly positive stance. Only 13% (22 respondents) offered negative feedback, with a further 13% (22) providing either balanced or neutral comment.

Positive comments included:

“[The way] the core knowledge explicitly focuses on technologies to enhance learning and avoids the danger of being too technologically specific.”
(University Alliance)

“The new framework, giving explicit guidance and support, is appropriate and should give some uniformity throughout HE establishments, which again will enhance teaching and learning.” (Individual)

“We welcome the greater emphasis on how new and emerging technologies will support the framework as core knowledge. The guidance recognises that technology now provides a core set of tools for the delivery of teaching materials (both in person and online).” (1994 Group)

Twenty-one respondents welcomed the emphasis on generality and the lack of specificity in the proposal, emphasising that this would enable institutions to use the framework more flexibly and prevent it from becoming rapidly outdated:

“Technology-enhanced learning (TEL) and other terms associated with it are bedevilled by the lack of agreed definitions. Any attempt at detailed guidance in the framework is likely to be time-limited and omit features of TEL as the area is changing so rapidly.” (Post-1992)

“In a rapidly changing area such as technology it is clearly unwise to detail guidance and we would recommend the approach suggested in the Appendix 2, i.e. to make minimal references under activity areas 2, 4 etc.”
(Russell Group)

“The document does not refer that much to technology, which is appreciated, as too much reference will date the framework. The important points here concern the thoughtful and appropriate use of technology, in line with values.”
(Pre-1992)

Despite overall positive support in principle regarding this question, some respondents raised questions about the nuance of language and expression. For example, the most frequently mentioned issue (raised by 35 respondents) focused on the use of the terms ‘new’, ‘emerging’ and ‘appropriate’ technologies. Six respondents asked why the emphasis was on ‘new’, arguing that existing technologies were equally important:

“We see new and emerging technologies as tools to support learning. It would seem prudent to focus not just on use and value, but to engage critically with the question of how such technologies can help students’ learning in different situations.” (Pre-1992)

“VLEs are no longer ‘new’, they are an established part of teaching practice.”
(University Alliance)

“We prefer the phrase ‘appropriate’ technologies over ‘new’ and ‘emerging’ technologies. The emphasis should always be retained on the effectiveness of a technology in supporting student learning – the addition of real added value to teaching and learning – whether that is chalk on a blackboard, a field trip on foot, or the latest wireless gadgets. The term ‘appropriate’ emphasises the technology’s relationship to learning objectives, rather than the technology itself or its ‘newness.’” (Russell Group)

Two HE-sector organisations (HEFCE and JISC) advised that the recommendations in the Online Learning Task Force (OLTF) report (2011) must be taken into account fully in revising the framework, while six respondents noted a distinction between the use of technology to enhance learning and the use of technology to support learning, emphasising in particular the needs of those who are distance learners or have disabilities. For example, *“Mention might usefully be made to the use of assistive technologies”* (Russell Group); *“in the case of many distance learners, how can its use be strengthened and enhanced to maximise the learning outcomes for students?”* (Small and Specialist).

Twelve respondents commented that technology was now sufficiently embedded within teaching and learning that it was unnecessary to include it as a separate aspect:

“The use of learning technologies should be an implicit and integrated part of any lecturer’s learning and teaching capabilities, therefore no need to include it in standard.” (Pre-1992)

“There must be emphasis and understanding of the ways in which technologies permeate the curriculum. They are no longer ‘add-on’ and knowledge creation now goes hand in hand with the use of technologies for both academics and students. The use of technologies needs to be integrated across the framework.” (University Alliance)

A number of respondents pointed to the difficulties inherent in developing guidance regarding technology, with some suggesting it was not feasible to offer more guidance while others suggested that further development was desirable:

“Given the scope and range of issues regarding the use of new technologies it is difficult to see how the framework can offer any more detailed guidance.” (GuildHE)

“We recognise the importance of including this area in the framework, although the coverage under core knowledge in Appendix 2 seems limited.” (Million+)

“Our reading is that this guidance is too concise to be helpful or even usable.” (1994 Group)

“We do not believe that D: ‘new and emerging technologies’ – ‘use and value of appropriate learning technologies’ goes far enough. It doesn’t take us much beyond the existing criterion in this area – perhaps this could be developed further?” (Million+)

“Inclusion of new and emerging technologies in the framework is important, although the specific detail is light. We didn’t feel more needed to be included, however; it was sufficient.” (Million+)

The fact that 73% of responses expressed support in principle for the inclusion of technology in the revised UKPSF is indicative of its perceived and growing importance in HE. Importantly, however, responses to this question also raised a number of insightful points about technologies and elicited helpful suggestions about how this issue might be taken forward, including improvements to the framework's wording. This is a matter that the HEA is taking forward through discussions in the sector and in the development of the FGN.

J. Sustainability: Question 7

As part of a concern to ensure that the framework is embedded within the developing HE context, the consultation also asked for comment on the location of a ‘sustainability’ focus within ‘global citizenship’ as one of the framework’s professional values. One hundred and sixty-eight respondents commented on this question, 38% of whom (65 respondents) expressed views that were positive overall (18% endorsed the approach and 20% were positive with caveats). There was, however, no significant support for including a specific ‘sustainability focus within global citizenship’ as a professional value in the revised framework; 43% of all those who commented (72 respondents) did not consider this appropriate.

As with other questions, the detail behind the statistics is important: for example, there was widespread comment among both those who were positive and those who were negative that a further clarification and definition of terms was needed: 74 respondents (44% of all who commented) pointed to this as a concern. It was felt that ‘sustainability’ and ‘global citizenship’ (i) lacked a common understanding (and moreover could be contentious) and (ii) were defined insufficiently clearly in the consultation document itself (for example, some respondents felt that the terminology was less precise than they would have wished):

“We feel that the framework has a duty to explain more fully its understanding of ‘sustainability’ and ‘global citizenship’ in this context, as differing interpretations and discourses abound.” (Pre-1992)

“We note that the precise meaning of both terms (‘sustainability’ and ‘global citizenship’) may be contested.” (Quality Strategy Network)

“The term ‘global citizenship’ is ... rather vague and would need to be better defined, if retained.” (HEFCE)

Twenty-two respondents also questioned what they saw as the privileged position given in the UKPSF to the sustainability agenda:

“... There is a danger of the framework trying to address too many agendas – although this is very worthy, we are not convinced this framework is the right

place to promote sustainability (as opposed to value for money, employability and a range of other important developments etc).” (University Alliance)

*“It would be better to leave specific requirements (of which there will always be a list) out of a high-level framework and allow the providers to recognise current needs and develop appropriate CPD activities to facilitate them.”
(Post-1992)*

“Particular strands and threads within an HEI’s curriculum should reflect the institutional mission and values. The UKPSF as a high-level framework should be broad enough to encompass these rather than attempt to be more directive. The sustainability and globalisation agendas have differing priorities depending on the institution, so in the UKPSF value statements should be indicative rather than substantive.” (Russell Group)

Respondents also suggested other potential priorities, including ethics/ethical conduct as well as equality and diversity:

“We are surprised that the HEA should have chosen the sustainability focus, while research, enterprise, academic citizenship or widening access arguably have greater merit. We are unclear on where the HEA’s specific remit for the development of sustainability in HE has come from.” (1994 Group)

“While we agree that sustainability is an extremely important agenda, it is not clear why it has been added as a Professional Value. Why sustainability, not employability or indeed any other themes?” (1994 Group)

Sixteen respondents commented that an emphasis on sustainability/global citizenship was too narrow a focus and argued that HEIs should be encouraged to interpret this professional value in ways that were more individual and specific to their own institutional missions. This was in part because they considered it offered a better ‘fit’ with the UKPSF remit and in part because of the potential impact of any additional requirements on institutional resources:

“... Valuable as these concepts are, we have concerns about how much we are being asked to embed in curricula. It would be better to give institutions the freedom to reflect their own learning and teaching strategies.” (Universities Scotland)

Echoing the above, several respondents pointed to the dangers of focusing on sustainability because it appeared ‘fashionable’, because of the dangers of specification and because of an associated likelihood that adopting a highly specified focus could quickly become outdated:

“The inclusion of this in a professional framework seems to be tokenistic and of the moment. It will seem curiously dated in five years’ time.” (GuildHE)

“We strongly oppose the addition of every new topical zeitgeist into the framework. If each latest initiative or strategy (sustainability, internationalisation, employability, etc) is added into the curriculum for accredited programmes, the programmes would become unmanageable.” (Russell Group)

While the foregrounding of sustainability and the concept of the global citizen in the revised framework was considered by a number of respondents to be laudable, the specificity and the contested nature of the definition of terms were deemed problematic in a high-level standards framework that needs to be capable of accommodating changing/future priorities. In further refining the framework, the HEA accepted the point made by many that, rather than focusing on sustainability, the identification of a more inclusive and flexible core professional value was appropriate and would be more supportive of institutional missions and values.

K. Qualified to teach: Question 8

In Question 8, respondents were invited to comment on four specific proposals within the overall theme of ‘Qualified to teach’ and to consider their feasibility in the context of the current HE policy and economic climate. Details of the specific focus of each question are set out below but, in general, the four questions concerned: (i) probationary academic staff; (ii) postgraduates who teach; (iii) HE staff with teaching responsibilities; and (iv) teaching observations. Many respondents did not necessarily address each of the individual elements in turn but, instead, provided overarching comments alongside some specific feedback on particular aspects. Detail regarding the analysis of the four specific questions is located towards the end of this section.

One hundred and sixty-five respondents commented on the overall set of proposals: 85 HE institutions, 20 sector-wide organisations and 60 individuals. Of those who commented, 64% indicated positive overall support for the proposals with 25% being positive without qualification and 38% being positive while offering at least some reservations or recommendations. Eighteen per cent of respondents took a neutral or balanced stance, while a further 18% were negative.

Positive comments often centred on the point that all the proposals were, in various respects, already considered good practice in the sector. Many respondents positively endorsed the need for, and importance of, greater consistency and standardisation around teaching qualifications, particularly in light of sector-wide changes and the likelihood of increasing student demands regarding teaching quality stemming from the rise in tuition fees:

“Most of these proposals are welcome and are in line with current and developing practice within this institution.” (Russell Group)

“This is a long overdue proposal which clarifies the need for a teacher to be qualified in order to teach effectively.” (GuildHE)

“We recognise that with the move of UK higher education towards a market environment, approaches to and perceptions of quality may change. We think the UKPSF could be a tool to mitigate effectively the associated risks.” (QAA)

“We support the general thrust of the proposals for teaching qualifications.”
(1994 Group)

“We agree it is highly desirable [that all staff with teaching responsibilities in higher education should be offered opportunities to gain a teaching qualification] and understand that it is widespread existing practice.” (SFC)

“Agree with all four proposals.” (Pre-1992)

“The AoME strongly supports the increasing professionalisation of teaching and educators, which brings with it the requirement to demonstrate the attainment of explicit standards, usually by successful completion of a course.” (AoME)

Negative comments and/or reservations tended to focus on the need for flexibility and the importance of retaining institutional autonomy. There were also concerns about potential difficulties in resourcing the proposals, especially at a time of economic constraint. The issue of flexibility within the proposals was also widely addressed by respondents. For example, 14 institutions and one sector-wide organisation argued that institutions should be able to determine their own arrangements regarding teaching qualifications:

“Each HEI is best placed to determine appropriate induction and training arrangements for ... staff.” (Russell Group)

“HEIs and other providers are autonomous bodies with the power to set the employment conditions of their own staff, including the requirements for completion of a probationary period.” (HEFCE)

A number of institutions explicitly articulated their understanding of the HEA's role in relation to the various elements within the question. For example, 13 respondents (ten institutions and three organisations) expressed concern at the prospect of the HEA gaining responsibility for accrediting all 'teaching' provision in HE (a proposal initially proposed by the Browne Review and taken up as a question in the UKPSF consultation). Three institutional respondents also expressed misgivings if the HEA was to become a regulatory rather than a facilitative body. While there were strong views that the development of professional standards and their enhancement

rested clearly within the HEA's remit and responsibilities, quality assurance issues were seen clearly to reside outside its brief.

Even when they supported the proposals, seventeen respondents suggested that they could be difficult to implement because of resourcing difficulties. However, a further 16 respondents (four institutions, six organisations and six individuals) argued that the impact of economic change on HE, the introduction of higher fees and growth in marketisation made the proposals both important and appropriate:

“The current economic and higher education climate make this more of an imperative.” (Pre-1992)

“We fully support the need to provide all teaching staff with professional development in their teaching. This is particularly relevant in the current economic climate to underpin a high-quality student experience. This also makes sense as an investment in staff and value for money, which ultimately reduces future ‘failure costs.’” (Million+)

“The proposals are supported. The current economic and policy environment will put a premium on the student experience, value for money and quality of provision. The most obvious way to demonstrate this is by having an expert and qualified teaching body. This will particularly be the case for colleagues working on ‘teaching-only’ contracts. In addition, the HE sector can be adversely compared with other sectors (schools, FE) without any requirement for regulated teacher training and development.” (Mixed Economy of Colleges)

The HEA recognises that, in an increasingly competitive marketplace, engagement with the UKPSF has the potential to be a key indicator of UK HE's commitment to teaching and supporting learning – an emphasis also implicit in the white paper (July 2011). A breakdown of the various consultation responses regarding specific comment on the four specific areas identified in this question is set out below.

i. Probationary academic staff

Comment was invited on the proposal that *“All probationary academic staff in HE institutions should be required to complete a relevant HEA-accredited teaching programme (e.g. a PG Certificate in Higher Education)”*.

Fifty-one respondents (including 38 HE institutions) provided specific comment on this question; 70% of responses were positive overall (i.e. 36 respondents, 28 of whom were HE institutions). The breakdown of responses is as follows:

- 43% positive;
- 27% positive with reservations;
- 18% negative;
- 12% neutral or balanced.

This question, which was considered somewhat contentious by a number of respondents (particularly those representing institutions), was asked to gain sector-wide feedback on the Browne Report's recommendation that *"It will be a condition of receipt of income from the student Finance Plan for the costs of learning that institutions require all new academics with teaching responsibilities to undertake a teaching training qualification accredited by the HEA."* Although respondents thought that the question was overly emphatic in tone, the analysis shows that they actually gave the proposal itself relatively significant endorsement. The most widespread concern focused on the use of the word 'probationary', with several respondents suggesting that variants of 'staff new to teaching' would be more appropriate:

"Not all 'probationary academic staff' are new to teaching, though that is the inference here. We are supportive of the proposition that those who are new to teaching should complete an HEA-accredited course, but do not believe that the requirement should be for this to be a credit-bearing award at 'M' level..."
(1994 Group)

"Many probationary academic staff now come from overseas and often have extensive teaching experience. They are not new or inexperienced lecturers. Some new staff also come from a school teaching background, either with or without a PGCE." (Individual)

"Some probationary staff will already have equivalent prior qualifications or experience, so 'all' needs to be tempered." (1994 Group)

ii. Postgraduates who teach

Respondents were invited to comment on the proposal that “All postgraduates who teach in UK higher education institutions should be required to complete HEA-accredited provision (equivalent to at least 20 M-level / level 7 credits) as a basic induction into higher education teaching”. Of the 59 responses to this question, 58% were positive overall (i.e. 34 respondents, 28 of whom were HE institutions). The breakdown of responses is as follows:

- 29% positive;
- 29% positive with reservations;
- 29% negative;
- 13% neutral or balanced.

Although there was a spread of responses to this question, a majority (positive plus positive with reservations) supported the need for postgraduates who teach to be given appropriate training and development. The point was made that, while it might be desirable, HEA accreditation was and should remain a voluntary rather than an obligatory process. The key area of disagreement focused on the issue of detail. For example, 22 respondents (comprising eighteen institutions, two organisations and two individuals) considered credit ratings and/or the academic level of qualifications to be matters best left to the discretion of individual institutions:

“We believe the HEA should go no further than to provide a framework within which institutions can develop provision that is appropriate to context.”
(1994 Group)

“We believe that institutions themselves should make decisions about the amount of credit, if any, that should be attached to any career development programme for postgraduate students, although agree that a requirement for training is a step forward in preparing career academics or researchers.” (Million+)

“The amount of teaching that postgraduates undertake varies enormously. The opportunity to proceed to accredited provision should be available, but the blanket requirement to complete ‘at least 20 Level 7 credits’ is not justified and not helpful.” (1994 Group)

“... The requirement that the module should be at M level is also inappropriate, since beginning teacher training needs to be largely practical in focus (albeit evidence-based), and the requirement for a level of scholarship which is higher than necessary distracts from this aim. This requirement seems to be inconsistent with the proposed descriptions set out for standards 1 and 2. It should be dropped.” (Russell Group)

Despite the above comments, 58% of respondents gave the proposal overall support in principle. There is also evidence that the majority of teaching programmes accredited by the HEA operate at M level; while credit values may vary to some degree across institutions, there is already a significant degree of commonality. In addition, as the demand for portability of qualifications grows, consistency of approach regarding credit allocation may become an increasingly important issue.

iii. All staff with teaching responsibilities

Comment was invited on the proposal that: *“All HE staff with teaching responsibilities in higher education should be offered opportunities to gain a teaching qualification, whether through initial or continuing professional development provision.”*

Fifty-two specific responses were received to this question, 75% of which were positive overall. These comprised 33% (seventeen respondents) who positively endorsed the proposal and 42% (22 respondents) who were positive but with at least some reservation – quite often associated with resourcing issues. The breakdown of responses is as follows:

- 33% positive;
- 42% positive with reservations;
- 15% negative;
- 10% neutral or balanced.

Specific comments relating to this proposal included positive endorsements such as:

“We fully support the need to provide all teaching staff with professional development in their teaching.” (Million+)

“SEDA believes that all who teach should be professionally qualified.” (SEDA)

However, 17 respondents (five institutions and two organisations) also pointed to potential resourcing difficulties if teaching qualifications for all staff who teach were to become obligatory:

“While it may be desirable to offer all staff with teaching responsibilities the opportunity to gain a teaching qualification, the costs and resources involved mean that this is unachievable.” (Russell Group)

“While we are sympathetic with the intention here, there would be very serious resourcing issues if this opportunity were widely taken up.” (Pre-1992)

Although the current constrained economic climate may well inhibit rather than enhance opportunities for all staff who teach to gain a teaching qualification, this is likely to be balanced by other pressures on institutions to demonstrate to both students and the wider public that teaching staff are well qualified to deliver good-quality teaching. The HEA remains keen to ensure that the UKPSF underpins this commitment.

iv. Teaching observations

Comment was invited on the proposal that: *“Teaching observations should become a formally required element and benchmark within all HE teaching qualification programmes for teaching staff.”*

This question attracted 58 responses, with 42 coming from HE institutions, four from sector organisations and twelve from individuals. The breakdown of responses is as follows:

- 12% positive;
- 21% positive with reservations;
- 41% negative;
- 26% neutral or balanced.

This part of the question received the highest proportion of negative comment. While 33% of responses were positive overall, 41% of responses were negative. The detail behind this negativity is important. For example, while a number of respondents were not against teaching observations per se, there was concern about their use for benchmarking teaching capability rather than as a tool for

reflection and enhancement. Twelve respondents (ten institutions, one organisation and one individual) explicitly raised this as an issue. Some felt that if teaching observations were to be used for benchmarking purposes, then this should be in conjunction with other capability measures; for example, it was argued that effective teaching involves more than 'classroom performance'. Others suggested that peer observation was equally if not more important because it provides a platform for CPD rather than just teaching capability:

“Teaching observations’ are decisions about course design and delivery or institutional policy and too specific a recommendation for a national framework.” (Million+)

“This move to prescribing how HEIs design and deliver their programmes beyond the main elements of the PSF is quite inappropriate.” (Russell Group)

Responses to this question indicated wide-ranging support in principle for the majority of elements in this question, with many comments asserting not only that the features were desirable but that they were already either existing or emerging good practice across the sector. However, respondents also identified a number of reservations, focused predominantly around issues of resourcing, detail and the language of specification/requirement. The HEA acknowledges the importance of flexibility and institutional autonomy and the value in sharing good practice, including what constitutes viable support for staff new to teaching – all of these issues were emphasised by a number of respondents as important.

L. Public information: Question 9

We received 92 responses to Question 9, which invited comment on the potential use of anonymised information about HE teaching staff qualifications and in particular the potential benefits and/or drawbacks that might accrue. The profile of responses reflected the 47 institutions, 13 organisations and 32 individuals who commented on this question. Two-thirds of respondents (66% of all respondents and 66% of all HE institutions) commenting on this question gave support in principle for the publication of such information. Only one-quarter (25%) of those who commented took a negative view, while 9% of responses were neutral or balanced.

Of the 47 institutions that commented on this question, 31 offered an overall positive endorsement. Eleven were negative and five were neutral or balanced. While the profile of comments across mission groups was relatively similar, research-intensive institutions tended to be less keen on the publication of information than were other institutions. For example, four Russell Group institutions expressed positive support in principle, two were neutral/balanced and five were negative. The 1994 Group had a similar profile (two positive, one neutral and two negative) while other mission groups tended to be more positive about publishing information regarding teaching qualifications and fellowships.

The reservations expressed by research-intensive institutions might be explained, at least in part, by comments that reflected underlying concerns about staff profiles in terms of teaching qualifications. However, given that two-thirds of respondents were supportive of the use of anonymised information, there is clearly a general willingness in the sector to engage with issues of transparency. While the practical and philosophical difficulties associated with the provision of public information were often acknowledged in responses, many of those who commented also emphasised their support in principle for the value of publication.

Positive comments emphasised the benefits of raising the profile of learning and teaching across the sector and within institutions if public information is gathered, collated and published in appropriate ways. Publication was welcomed as a way of incentivising and motivating institutions, strengthening the case for the professionalisation of teaching, increasing transparency both within institutions and for students and the public, as well as directly addressing concerns about teaching quality as student fees rise. Responses also indicated general support for the potential of publication to reinforce a sector-wide understanding and use of the UKPSF:

“We welcome the transparency, and can see that one of the potential benefits of publishing anonymised information about HE teaching staff qualifications and fellowships would be a means of getting more experienced teaching staff to engage with the UK PSF.” (1994 Group)

“This would provide an incentive for institutional policy to support staff attainment of teaching qualifications.” (University Alliance)

“We support transparency and clarity of information for students, parents and potential staff. This information would provide useful information about quality standards in the institution, provided that the data are meaningful as an indicator.” (Russell Group)

“We believe that this would be an opportunity to benchmark and motivate institutions and individuals.” (Post-1992)

“Professional pedagogical qualifications in HE should be available to view within the public domain, and students should have an entitlement to know which staff within their chosen university meet the professional standards. These should be a matter of personal and institutional pride.” (GuildHE)

“Against the background of the current drive to provide the public with more, and more transparent, information about higher education and its providers, we agree in principle with the publication of anonymised information about higher education teaching staff qualifications and fellowships.” (QAA)

“We agree with this in principle as information that should be in the public domain. This point should apply to all staff.” (Russell Group)

“SEDA would be pleased to see the level of professional pedagogic qualification of all staff in HE as a matter of public knowledge.” (SEDA)

“The availability of anonymised information about higher education staff qualifications (teaching or otherwise, at whatever level) is welcomed, although recognition is given to the dangers of simplistic quantitative targets and the use to which such statistics might be put in national league tables.

The information about HEA Fellowships would be welcomed for institutional use.” (Million+)

“... We believe such information might usefully be made public, provided that it is accurate and validated by institutions (and other providers) and does not impose an undue administrative burden on them. To be valid, the data should include other relevant teaching qualifications (for example, teaching in further education).” (HEFCE)

“In light of the Government’s policy of increasing transparency some information about the institutional commitment to excellence in teaching and enhancing the student experience would be useful; however, the question is whether this would provide reliable and valid information.” (1994 Group)

Responses that articulated more negative concerns tended to put a particular emphasis on the potential for misinterpretation of data, the use and impact of league tables, a perceived overly strong emphasis on HEA-accredited courses, likely resource implications for institutions and potential difficulties in gathering data. Nine respondents (including six institutions, one organisation (HEFCE) and two individuals) emphasised the need to ensure that all relevant qualifications, including those not accredited by the HEA, should be included in any public information. Some recommended that the HEA should adopt a neutral role: for example, by emphasising that data should include all relevant teaching qualifications and appropriate provision accredited by various bodies:

“... We strongly disagree with the HEA’s proposal to publish, on an annual basis, data on staff qualifications and fellowships. These data would be very misleading and could be used in league tables ... The HEA must recognise that the diversity of the sector means it would be inappropriate to draw comparisons between institutions.” (Russell Group)

“In principle we agree that HE teaching staff should be appropriately qualified. However, publishing information related to staff in small HEIs has drawbacks – it may be possible to identify individual staff members. Also, thought should be given to who is the audience for such information and how it may be interpreted – poor interpretation of such information may prove unfairly damaging for some HEIs.” (GuildHE)

“We have concerns that the information should not be solely restricted to HEA-accredited provision. The current proposal implies that the HEA obtains a monopoly position.” (Russell Group)

“We do not support this proposal. Such information is potentially misleading and unfair ... Furthermore, if the HEA feels that this information is so important then we are surprised that it is not included in the HEFCE-UUK consultation on changes to information published by institutions.” (Russell Group)

Six respondents (four organisations and two individuals) argued that it was important for contextualised information to be included in public information about teaching qualifications: for example, HEFCE made a very important point in advising that publication should *“be accompanied by a very clear explanation of what is, and is not, included, together with a statement to the effect that, while experienced academics may not have completed accredited qualifications or may not have been recognised as a fellow by the HEA, this does not mean they are not competent teachers”*. The HEA was also encouraged to work closely with HEFCE (including the Higher Education Public Information Steering Group, charged with taking forward the public information in HE agenda in England) as well as the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) (particularly through its work on the ‘staff record’) to ensure and maintain a fully collaborative approach to addressing this issue.

Responses to this question indicated that the principle of transparency is widely accepted. A significant number of those who commented agreed that such information rightly belongs in the public domain, with many endorsing the view that the provision of public information about teaching qualifications and fellowship could become a powerful way of encouraging both individuals and HE institutions to adopt a stronger focus on the professionalisation of teaching, whether through engagement with the UKPSF or other routes.

In summary, the principal advantages identified by respondents in relation to the publication of data were: opportunities for enhancing the visibility and recognition of teaching; addressing the issue of transparency around activity and providing opportunities for internal as well as sector-wide comparability and benchmarking; an enhanced focus on personal, professional and institutional development; the potential for experienced and/or senior staff to engage more actively with the UKPSF and HEA fellowship(s); and the potential for increases in institutional investment in accredited provision.

In terms of potential drawbacks, respondents were most concerned about: the challenges involved in gathering data (e.g. its validity and reliability); the resource implications in a difficult economic environment; the potential for the inappropriate use of data in league tables and the risks of their simplistic use (e.g. an emphasis on qualification over quality; a concern with compliance over enhancement); and the tensions between the desirability of including a broad range of qualifications/data on the one hand, and the inherent difficulties in comparing data on the other – particularly when alternative qualifications and/or accreditation frameworks are incorporated in the exercise. The HEA fully acknowledges the importance of working collaboratively with sector bodies and organisations to ensure that sensitive issues are addressed in a way that enables fully contextualised, reliable and robust data to facilitate the further professionalisation of teaching.

M. Potential for professional standards collaboration: Question 10

Question 10 sought comment on the potential for greater collaboration between the HEA and other professional bodies/associations regarding professional standards related to teaching. As might be anticipated, responses to this question were overwhelmingly positive.

Overall, 89% (142 out of the 159 responses to this question) supported the notion of collaboration over professional standards for teaching. Only 5% of respondents expressed a negative view, with a further 6% adopting a balanced or neutral stance. The most commonly expressed benefits of collaboration as identified by respondents included:

- Opportunities for engagement on key issues: *“This should definitely be explored further – it will also demonstrate the HEA’s concern for disciplinary expertise while supporting more engagement.”* (University Alliance)
- Potential savings for institutions: *“The lack of the alignment and the refusal of bodies to recognise each other’s accreditation have led to significant additional costs to universities.”* (GuildHE)
- Common approaches: *“Collaborations with other professional bodies are essential to ensure alignment of requirements to facilitate genuine staff development rather than multiple hurdles. For example, the role of the teacher in medicine is becoming increasingly emphasised and the General Medical Council are currently undertaking their own review of guidelines for the development of teachers and trainers. We support collaboration to ensure that common approaches to teaching and learning are developed.”* (Russell Group)

Other positive comments included:

“We would welcome any collaboration that would make UKPSF something that our staff could recognise through avenues other than those usually associated with teaching. PSRBs are the natural professional ‘home’ for frontline teaching staff, and their support would strengthen the case for UKSPF.” (Pre-1992)

“It is clearly in the interests of the whole sector that different professional standards frameworks be aligned where possible, using common language and ideas.” (1994 Group)

“As a university we are keen to avoid replication of activity in satisfying the requirements of both the HEA and professional bodies/associations, so we would welcome stronger alignment of such standards and expectations.” (Million+)

“This is certainly worth exploring, especially in regard to professional requirements regarding undertaking and recording CPD on an ongoing basis.” (University Alliance)

“Vitae values the existing relationship with the HE Academy and would welcome the opportunity for greater collaboration, in particular with respect to the alignment between the UKSPF and the Vitae Researcher Development Framework. For the majority of academics both teaching and research form significant parts of the role, at most if not all stages of their careers ... the alignment and complementarity of the frameworks will undoubtedly assist staff to plan intended career paths more effectively, and to move easily, and with greater insight, from a focus on one role to the other.” (Vitae)

“We would strongly support greater collaboration and calibration of standards between HEA and other relevant professional bodies/associations, both nationally (e.g. QAA) and internationally.” (1994 Group)

While encouraging collaboration, respondents emphasised the need for this to be targeted. For example, specific mention was made of Subject Associations, the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC), Vitae and SEDA. While further, targeted exploration was considered appropriate, it was seen as key that it should focus on alignment across professional standards.

Respondents also identified various caveats, the most significant of which was a concern about the potential demands on the HEA, the resources required as well as the scope of collaborative activity given the number and diversity of such bodies. There were also concerns about the highly prescriptive nature of some professional bodies:

“We would support greater collaboration in relation to other bodies ... However, a potential danger in alignment with other professional standards is that some are highly prescriptive, having taken a competence approach ... It would be essential that any alignment did not compromise the more open and flexible approach to standards that that has been taken hitherto in HE.” (Russell Group)

“The only concern is that there are some professional frameworks which are highly prescriptive and the UKPSF should not have to be compromised to align with these.” (University Alliance)

“Attempting to create synergies with other bodies is fine as long as the HEA does not go down the competences route which is favoured by some professional bodies.” (Post-1992)

“There are too many of these bodies to get any real benefit from this. In order to be convinced of the usefulness of such collaborations we would want to be presented with examples.” (Russell Group)

A clear view emerged from responses to this question that collaboration could become a ‘virtuous circle’ for all parties – benefiting institutions, individuals, the HEA and related bodies/associations – providing there were clear aims and focused activities. However, in a period of constrained resources and with an increasing need to target work priorities, the HEA recognises that it is both important and advisable that any such activity is very relevant to its mission and work profile, as well as appropriate in terms of the potential impact on institutions and the wider sector.

N. The Standard Descriptors: Question II

Question II asked for responses to the proposed revisions in relation to the standard descriptors in general and the introduction of Standard Descriptor 4: 'Principal Fellowship' in particular.

Responses to this question indicated significant support in principle for the proposed revisions: more than twice as many respondents supported the proposals as objected to them. Ninety-four respondents (64% of the 148 who commented) agreed overall with the proposals, with 62 of them (42% of those offering comment) being positive without reservation and 32 (22% of those commenting) being positive but with caveats. While only 39 respondents (26%) expressed negative views, 15 (10%) adopted a broadly neutral or balanced stance.

Positive comments included views that the framework was now much clearer and better specified than the earlier version. In particular, it was considered that Standard Descriptor 4 (linked with 'Principal Fellowship') provided a helpful extension to the HE professional development pathway and would promote CPD.

It was also thought crucial that the alignment of Standard Descriptor 3 and Senior Fellowship would end a situation that one respondent described as the "*standard descriptor without a name*". In addition, many expressed the view that the 'professional academic journey' was now better explained, with the likely result that senior academics and managers would be much more likely to engage with the UKPSF and thereby promote and value learning and teaching:

"The new proposals are far clearer than the original framework and offer a clearer explication of the professional academic journey." (Million+)

"[The] introduction of clear descriptions at level 3 and 4 are much more likely to encourage authentic CPD." (Individual)

"Adding Standard Descriptor 4 is welcomed. The revised descriptors provide a clearer link to the roles played at different stages within a higher education teaching and academic career." (Russell Group)

"The university fully supports the development of the framework on the grounds that the standard descriptors are now clearer, better specified and more

complete. A further advantage is that each standard descriptor now carries a widely understood academic appellation. The progression from Associate to Fellow, to Senior Fellow to Principal Fellow draws on a hierarchy of grades that the sector is familiar with, and is a vast improvement on the previous three-fold structure in which SD3 was the standard descriptor without a name. The proposed structure will make it much easier to marry the standard descriptors with reward and promotion procedures within individual HEIs.” (1994 Group)

“We support the introduction of SD4. It extends the framework in a way that encourages engagement by and recognition for senior staff.” (Russell Group)

“Aligning Standard Descriptor 3 with Senior Fellow seems sensible as this standard has not been developed in practice.” (Million+)

“[We] warmly welcome the realignment of the UKPSF as offering a progression from early-career researchers starting to teach through to institutional leaders of learning and teaching.” (1994 Group)

“We welcome the four levels proposed in the revised UKPSF and the clear and transparent links with levels of professional recognition ... The new clarity regarding level 3 is particularly welcomed and should prove a valuable addition for institutions seeking to develop recognised structures to support and reward the professional development of staff involved in the management and leadership of large modules, programmes and learning and teaching more widely.” (Small and Specialist)

“We strongly support the introduction of a Principal Fellowship. It could engage very senior academics and managers in promoting and valuing learning and teaching and professional development, which is a positive message that we want to disseminate.” (University Alliance)

“[Introducing SD4 will] send a clear message to senior managers about the importance of leadership in teaching and learning.” (Million+)

“We strongly support the introduction of SD4, without which any links to career development would be difficult.” (1994 Group)

The thematic analysis for this question demonstrates that no single common reservation was cited by those taking a negative view. Instead, there were a cluster of concerns that tended to focus around matters of specific or particular detail: these included suggestions that Standard Descriptor 4 did not appear fully congruent with the other three descriptors; that its potential may not be recognised by senior staff; and that it appeared to focus on management roles at the expense of learning and teaching excellence.

Other queries emphasised the importance of congruence between the language and requirements in Standard Descriptor 4 compared with the other three standard descriptors and the need for consistency of approach between Standard Descriptor 4 and the three other standard descriptors in terms of explicit links with the areas of activity, core knowledge and professional values:

“We are not convinced that the introduction of Standard Descriptor 4 is valuable as it does not refer to any of the areas of activity, core knowledge or professional values and so lacks any credibility. It appears that this standard descriptor can be attained by appointment to a particular post and we do not see this as an appropriate way to formulate a standards framework.”
(University Alliance)

Seven respondents queried an implicit or automatic equation of Standard Descriptor 4 with Principal Fellowship (although only one of these respondents was negative about the idea of Standard Descriptor 4 overall). However, others valued the potential for linkage, seeing it as beneficial and useful in career enhancement and CPD terms. Three respondents suggested that Standard Descriptor 4 would benefit from further refinement because in its current form it might mean that only those already in senior positions would be eligible to apply for a Principal Fellowship:

“The UKPSF should be expressed in terms of competence in relation to areas of activity, core knowledge and professional values; it should not be expressed in terms of post-holding and place in a management structure.” (University Alliance)

“It would be difficult to envisage someone being eligible for that status unless they had been appointed to one of those roles – in which case is it not redundant? Or at least could be awarded to any person appointed to that role.”
(1994 Group)

One respondent suggested that staff might try to ‘leapfrog’ the various stages of professional development and learning and achieve Standard Descriptor 4 if it was linked too closely with post/job title rather than knowledge, skills, experience and teaching/learning expertise.

“... Heads of Department or Faculties are often appointed to these roles not necessarily because they are good teachers but rather because they are good managers or researchers. It would be inappropriate if these individuals became Principal Fellows without a major contribution to the development of teaching within their institutions.” (Individual)

Some respondents commented that Standard Descriptor 4 could be more inclusive: ten suggested that using job titles was relatively narrow and that “some of the ideas about ‘typical’ career/progression routes may soon appear rather dated in some HE contexts” (Million+). One individual also suggested that Standard Descriptor 3 and Standard Descriptor 4 could be more inclusive of support staff:

“A wide range of academic-related roles in the area of engaging with employers, learner involvement and within teaching and learning support roles (emphasising study skills, support for dyslexia, etc) seem to be downplayed.” (Individual)

Fifteen respondents suggested that the revised framework could imply a hierarchy not present in the existing standards, with one asking whether the framework’s credibility might become undermined for relatively junior academic staff and postgraduate students if senior staff did not recognise the value of Senior Fellowship and/or Principal Fellowship. Some suggested that the focus on role descriptors, particularly in the articulation of Standard Descriptor 3 and Standard Descriptor 4, might be too strong; meanwhile, six respondents sought clarification about the interface between National Teaching Fellows, the framework and linked Fellowship categories to avoid duplication or confusion.

Responses to this question indicated a general, widespread approval of the revised framework at a structural level (i.e. the use of four standard descriptors) and, in particular, the introduction of a clear relationship between Standard Descriptor 3 and HEA Fellowship. While there is a strong commitment to the need for a continuing focus on teaching and learning and their impact, there is also strong support in principle for the

introduction of Standard Descriptor 4. (Although caveats tended to focus on the need for further refinement and clarity around, for example, definitions of strategic leadership.)

The HEA has endeavoured to address the detailed issues raised about the emphasis on role/job descriptions and the importance of ensuring consistency across all standard descriptors (for example, in the way they map onto the areas of activity, core knowledge and professional values). The alignment of fellowship categories with standard descriptors was also explicitly seen as helpful, including the importance of ensuring that they are not automatically linked or conflated: this was seen by a number of respondents as potentially undermining the value of the UKPSF to the sector.

O. Recognition, reward and promotion: Question 12

Question 12 invited comment on three elements relevant to the UKPSF that focused on recognition, reward and promotion. These elements were:

- a. the appropriateness of the potential criteria/indicators outlined in Appendix 4 and the degree to which these reflect the focus adopted within individual institutions;
- b. the appropriateness of the likely sources of evidence outlined in Appendix 4 and their potential value within individual institutions; and
- c. possible approaches to populating the various career stages (i.e. how far any of the evidence sources might be seen within individual institutions as 'essential' or 'desirable' for particular career points).

The responses received as part of the consultation regarding each of these elements is detailed separately below.

a. Appropriateness of potential criteria/indicators

Responses to this element of the question were broadly positive: 66% of respondents (96 of the 147 who commented) agreed overall that the criteria/indicators in Appendix 4 were appropriate and potentially useful. In detail, 32 respondents (22% of those responding) were positive without reservation, while a further 64 (44% of responses) were supportive but with at least some caveats or reservations.

Positive comments referred to the usefulness of Appendix 4 in articulating the role and function of HE teachers at various levels and its utility in helping institutions and individuals to plan for progression, promotion and reward. Examples include:

“The indicators in Appendix 4 will certainly be useful for us in assembling promotion criteria.” (1994 Group)

“Appendix 4 gives useful guidelines to explain the role and function of teachers at various levels and would help to ‘professionalise’ the work of teaching staff. It will be of great use to institutions and individuals in career planning and progression.” (Mixed Economy Group of Colleges)

“In principle the indicators of teaching quality and sources of evidence provided by the framework have the potential for use in reviewing and developing our own criteria for promotion ... We can also see the value of using the HEA document as good practice for the development of our own job descriptions and person specifications.” (Russell Group)

“The sections reflect the framework well and there is a clear coherence between the criteria and evidence to the areas within the framework. They are clear and concise and incorporate all of the major attributes of a good teaching practitioner.” (NUS)

The UKPSF consultation document had specifically emphasised that *“Appendix 4 is not prescriptive but is provided by the HEA as a stimulus for debate across the sector, as a potential outline framework for further development within individual institutions, and as a way of encouraging, on a sector-wide basis, the development of a shared consensus around a possible core of teaching-related criteria and evidence”* (page 14). Despite the clarity of the statement, various respondents interpreted this question in prescriptive terms, with support being qualified by comment that the HEA should acknowledge institutional autonomy in determining promotions criteria:

“The inclusion of a framework which expects HEIs to develop indicators in the context of their own priorities and identities is welcomed. The use of a framework of criteria/evidence can be a useful element in a range of information that informs decisions. However, in this case there is a danger of this being too formulaic and it would certainly be problematic if it were closely linked to promotion. The HEA is to be reminded that institutions decide on their own promotions criteria and practices.” (Post-1992)

“... It is questionable whether it is actually an appropriate matter for the HEA to steer institutional promotion criteria.” (1994 Group)

“Appendix 4 of the consultation paper is a helpful list of criteria for appointments at different levels, but it is the adaptation and putting into operation of these criteria by institutions that will ensure appropriate recognition and reward for excellent teaching. Moreover, the criteria should not be presented as part of the framework, as they serve a different purpose. The

HEA working more strategically with institutions will be crucial to this aspect of the professionalisation of teaching.” (HEFCE)

“We have some concerns that reference to such a table could encourage an overly reductive approach to what are actually holistic judgments. It would be unfortunate to encourage institutions to tick particular examples of evidence as ‘essential’. For different individuals, the various criteria will come into play at different stages and in different ways.” (Russell Group)

Others respondents (e.g. UCEA) encouraged the HEA to relate the criteria more closely to national role profiles and guidance produced through the Joint Negotiation Committee for Higher Education Staff (JNCHES) on remuneration, recognition and reward.

b. Potential value of likely sources of evidence in Appendix 4

There were 67 responses to this aspect of the question, the vast majority of which (75%) were positive or positive with reservations. Only 18% of those who commented responded negatively, with 7% of respondents adopting a neutral or balanced stance. Positive comments included:

“The nature of the evidence that could be used to demonstrate the attributes required for promotion is not explicitly prescribed at XXXX, and in this respect the indicators in Appendix 4 would be a useful source of guidance for those applying for promotion ... Appendix 4 will also serve as a potentially useful reference for institutions when reviewing their promotions criteria.” (Russell Group)

“XXXX welcomes the provision of this indicative information for consideration and, if appropriate, use within individual organisations.” (GuildHE)

“These lists are potentially useful for institutions in exploring the local availability of evidence and selecting the sources which are most appropriate.” (Million+)

As with responses to part 12a, while respondents expressing positive views considered the exemplars in Appendix 4 useful in determining evidence and criteria,

they often also emphasised the need for institutional responsibility in this area. For example, several respondents commented on the ‘fit’ of the evidence sources outlined in Appendix 4 with their own specific institutional contexts:

“These seem entirely reasonable and helpful for raising the profile of teaching in an institution but decisions about promotion and respective grades are a matter for individual institutions that will need to be responsive to local pressures.” (GuildHE)

“Staff reward, recognition and promotion are matters within the jurisdiction of individual HEIs. There may be some value in the HEA providing examples/ case studies but it is for HEIs to decide what is essential or desirable for their context. Many institutions, including our own, have highly developed policies in this area which include teaching-related criteria and we do not feel that the framework would add value to these existing policies.” (Russell Group)

“The university’s own promotions criteria are far more flexible, reflecting the variety of roles and career aspirations of staff, the complex interactions between teaching, administration/management and research roles, and the fact that staff may perform at significantly different levels in different areas of their work.” (1994 Group)

“We would resist defining likely sources of evidence for each role as this may conflict with institutional roles and pay and reward structures.” (Million+)

c. Possible approaches to ‘populating’ the various career stages

As with the previous element in this question, relatively few respondents (58 in total) specifically answered this question. In many cases, it appears that they thought they had addressed the relevant points in their initial answer to the first part of the question. Of those commenting, 38% (22 respondents) were positive or positive with reservations, while 45% (26 respondents) were negative and 17% (ten respondents) were neutral or balanced in comment. Negativity tended to focus predominantly around concerns about institutional autonomy, around the HEA’s role, and around the need for institutions to be able to retain flexibility in approaching matters of promotion criteria.

Positive comments related to the value of making criteria such as those outlined in Appendix 4 explicit, with respondents being broadly supportive of publishing guidance that might assist institutions and individuals regarding progression issues in teaching. For example:

“We see the value of making criteria such as these explicit, and welcome the HEA’s attempt to provide a very comprehensive list of examples in Appendix 4 ... using the list provided as a ‘toolkit’ to support institutions to enhance their existing policies, procedures and guidance for staff who are seeking promotion on the basis of their teaching would be a useful way forward.” (Pre-1992)

Others commented that a better approach might be to focus on the sharing of existing good practice:

“The notion of having teaching recognised, rewarded and included in any promotion policy is supported. It is felt however that, as many institutions have done this already and have similar approaches to Appendix 4, it would be more appropriate for the HEA to make recommendations in this area and share information about such processes across the sector.” (Pre-1992)

Even when respondents were positive about identifying and sharing sources of evidence and potential criteria, they also emphasised flexibility and institutional autonomy, with eight individuals and 20 institutions (69% of institutions commenting on this part of the question) making the point. For example:

“While guidance in this area is useful, it is important to allow flexibility in these criteria/indicators to accommodate existing institutional promotion criteria, some of which will relate to internal development opportunities and strategic priorities. Similarly, an overly prescriptive approach to types of acceptable evidence would not be helpful.” (Post-1992)

The potential value of Appendix 4 as additional guidance for institutions was widely appreciated in responses to all three parts of the question. Overall, the exemplars of criteria, sources of evidence and the use of these at particular career points were seen as useful support for institutions in framing and developing their own

teaching-related promotions criteria. However, as with other questions, there were also concerns about retaining flexibility and the importance of institutional autonomy.

Given the understandable importance attached by HE institutions to such matters in relation to reward, recognition and promotion processes, the HEA has endeavoured to ensure that the revised UKPSF provides flexible support for both institutions and individuals. It is important to emphasise that it was not the HEA's intention to appear prescriptive in this area. Neither was there any intention that guidance on the reward and recognition of teaching should form part of the framework itself.

Rather, as respondents to this question noted, support in this area is provided most effectively through the sharing of good practice, the generation of debate, and the provision of supportive guidance material across institutions and sector-agencies. Consequently, following review and revision in light of detailed responses to this question, the HEA has endeavoured to ensure that the content of Appendix 4 is reflected as supportive information within the FGN. Such guidance will then be able to be updated with further exemplars of good practice as and when institutions wish to share their own development work in relation to the reward and recognition of teaching with others across the sector.

P. Conclusion

Following the national consultation and analysis of responses, the HEA further refined and revised the proposed framework. This has, in turn, been subjected to further discussion and ‘soundings’ with interested parties and representative groups from across the sector, leading to the development of the final version of the UKPSF. The final stage in its development is the request for endorsement from relevant funders and sector-wide bodies (HEFCE, HEFCW, DELNI, SFC, UUK, GuildHE) as well as the support of NUS.

The HEA considers that the revised UKPSF will:

- provide a strengthened focus on developing teaching excellence within an academic practice context, while maintaining and building on core aspects of the original framework;
- acknowledge the wider range of teaching and learning support responsibilities undertaken by staff in HE;
- articulate and demonstrate a more comprehensive progression pathway through, for example, the introduction of ‘Principal Fellowship’, which is relevant to more experienced staff;
- facilitate the fuller alignment of professional recognition with each of the four standard descriptors (for example, through the alignment of ‘Senior Fellowship’ with the UKPSF);
- focus on the development of excellence in ‘teaching’ as well as ‘support for learning’; and
- demonstrate its fitness for purpose in the context of the ongoing changes and challenges facing HE institutions and their staff and students.

Operational changes made to the 2011 UKPSF comprise:

- a change to the framework’s nomenclature from ‘standard descriptor’ to ‘descriptor’;
- an expansion in the number of descriptors from three to four. The introduction of Descriptor 4 facilitates the further professional development of staff and articulates a clearer progression pathway;
- clearer information about typical career stages and the kinds of evidence

- that enable individuals to demonstrate their achievements in relation to the descriptors; and
- the development of FGN (currently under development). These will provide individuals and institutions with further detail and explanatory guidance on specific aspects of the framework, and offer exemplars of good practice from across the sector to support further innovation and development.

Related changes to the HEA's fellowship categories are:

- a change in the nomenclature from 'Associate' to 'Associate Fellow', which is, as before, aligned with Standard Descriptor 1;
- the alignment of Fellow with Standard Descriptor 2, as before;
- the alignment of 'Senior Fellow' with Standard Descriptor 3; and
- the alignment of 'Principal Fellow' with Standard Descriptor 4.

Annex A Respondents to the UKPSF consultation: HE institutions and organisations

Institutions

Institutions

Ashridge Business School
Bangor University
Bath Spa University
Birmingham City University
Bishop Grosseteste University College Lincoln
Bournemouth University
Brunel University
Canterbury Christ Church University
Cardiff University
Central School of Speech and Drama
City University London
Coventry University
Cranfield University
De Montfort University
Durham University
Edinburgh Napier University
Glasgow Caledonian University
Imperial College of London
Institute of Education, University of London
Keele University
King's College London
Kingston University
Lancaster University
Leeds Metropolitan University
Liverpool John Moores University
London Metropolitan University
London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
London South Bank University
Loughborough University

Manchester Metropolitan University
Middlesex University
Newcastle University
Northumbria University
Nottingham Trent University
Oxford Brookes University
Queen Margaret University
Queen Mary, University of London
Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen
Roehampton University
Rose Bruford College
Royal Northern College of Music
Thames Valley University
The Open University
UHI Millennium Institute
University for the Creative Arts
University of Aberdeen
University of Bath
University of Bedfordshire
University of Birmingham
University of Bradford
University of Brighton
University of Bristol
University of Cambridge
University of Central Lancashire
University of Chester
University of Cumbria
University of Derby
University of East Anglia
University of East London
University of Edinburgh
University of Exeter
University of Glamorgan
University of Glasgow
University of Greenwich
University of Hertfordshire

University of Huddersfield
University of Leeds
University of Leicester
University of Lincoln
University of Manchester
University of Northampton
University of Nottingham
University of Oxford
University of Plymouth
University of Reading
University of Salford
University of Sheffield
University of Southampton
University of Strathclyde
University of Sunderland
University of Teesside
University of the Arts London
University of the West of England
University of Ulster
University of Wales Institute Cardiff
University of Wales Newport
University of Warwick
University of Wolverhampton
University of Worcester
Writtle College

Organisations

Academy of Medical Educators (AoME)
Association for Learning Technology (ALT)
Association for University Research and Industry Links (AURIL)
Association of Learning Development in HE (ALDinHE)
Engineering Council
Environmental Association for Universities and Colleges (EAUC)
ESCalate
HEA accreditors

Heads of e-Learning Forum (HeLF)
HEDG
HEDW
HEFCE
HEFCW
Institute of Mathematics and its applications (IMA)
JISC
London Mathematical Society (LMS)
Mixed Economy Group of Colleges (MEG)
NUS
QAA
QAA Scotland
Quality Strategy Network
SEDA
SFC
SCAP
The Institute for Learning (IfL)
The Maths, Stars and OR Network (MSOR)
Universities and Colleges Employers Association (UCEA)
Universities Scotland
University and College Union
VITAE

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