

## What is the UK Professional Standards Framework?



The HEA has developed a series of Guidance Notes to support the effective use of the 2011 Framework. These are intended as a dynamic and developmental set of documents. They will be extended and amended over time in response to the needs of the learning and teaching community.

### The Guidance Notes answer the following questions:

1. What is the UKPSF?
2. What are the Descriptors?
3. What are the Dimensions?
4. How has the Framework changed?
5. In what ways can the Framework be used?
6. Accreditation

### This information note answers the following questions:

- 1.1 What is the Framework?
- 1.2 How has it changed?
- 1.3 Who does it belong to?
- 1.4 What is it for?
- 1.5 How does the HEA use the Framework?
- 1.6 How can you use it?
- 1.7 Want to know more?

#### **1.1 What is the framework?**

The UKPSF provides a general description of the main dimensions of the roles of teaching and supporting learning within the HE environment. It is written from the perspective of the practitioner and outlines a national framework for comprehensively recognising and benchmarking teaching and learning support roles within Higher Education.

The Framework has two components:<sup>1</sup>

#### **The descriptors**

These are a set of statements outlining the key characteristics of someone evidencing four broad categories of typical teaching and learning support roles within Higher Education.

#### **The dimensions of practice**

These are a set of statements outlining the:

1. Areas of Activity undertaken by teachers and supporters of learning within HE
2. Core Knowledge that is needed to carry out those activities at the appropriate level
3. Professional Values that someone performing these activities should embrace and exemplify

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<sup>1</sup> For the full document go to [www.heacademy.ac.uk/ukpsf](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/ukpsf)

## **1.2 How has it changed?**

There have been a number of detailed enhancements to the Framework following the recent consultation. These are described in a separate information note. Two key changes have been revisions to Descriptor 3 and the addition of Descriptor 4.

## **1.3 Who does it belong to?**

The Framework has been developed by the HEA on behalf of the sector as a whole and so it is the property of all of those with a direct interest in the HE sector.

## **1.4 How does the HEA use the Framework?**

The HEA provides a recognition and accreditation service which enables staff providing teaching and/or learning support to be recognised, depending on their role and experience, as an Associate Fellow, Fellow, Senior Fellow or Principal Fellow of the Academy.

## **1.5 What is it for?**

Its central purpose is to help those seeking to enhance the learning experience of their students, by improving the quality of their teaching and learning support. It has a wide range of uses, but it could, for example, be used to:

- Promote the professionalisation of teaching and learning support within the HE sector;
- Foster creative and innovative approaches to teaching and learning;
- Enable HE staff to gain recognition and reward for developing their capabilities as teachers and supporters of learning;
- Facilitate and support the design and delivery of initial and continuing education development programmes and activities ;
- Demonstrate to students and other stakeholders the professionalism that staff and institutions bring to teaching and support for student learning;
- Support Senior Staff seeking to:
  - develop policies and systems for the recognition and reward of teaching and learning support staff
  - promote a strong culture of teaching and learning support.

## **1.6 How can you use the framework?**

The framework has been designed to cover all aspects of teaching and learning support. If you have a substantive role in the education of students or staff, it will be relevant to your situation. Depending on your specific role you can use it to become an Associate Fellow, Fellow, Senior Fellow or Principal Fellow. This will give you national recognition as a higher education educator. Review the descriptors to see which one would be appropriate for you. You don't necessarily have to start as an Associate Fellow and work through to Fellow, Senior Fellow and Principal Fellow. You can gain recognition appropriate to your current role and recent experience.

You can use the framework to plan and guide your CPD in the area of teaching and learning. There is a natural progression through the Framework as the scope of your teaching/learning support role widens and deepens and the Framework can help you whatever stage you are at and whatever your goals in this field of activity. If you are involved in the training and development of teaching and/or

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learning support staff, you can use the Framework to design and structure your development programmes. You can also make use of the accreditation service provided by the HEA. Successful participants in HEA Accredited programmes and schemes are automatically entitled to become Associate Fellows/Fellows/Senior Fellows<sup>2</sup> (depending on the descriptor of accreditation) so this is a valuable means of enabling your staff to gain HEA recognition.

If you have a senior managerial role, you can use the framework to help you to enhance the quality and prominence of the teaching and learning activities within your remit. There are many ways in which it can be used. Two examples are:

- its requirements can be included in job descriptions for posts with substantive teaching requirements
- it can form the basis for policy statements with regard to teaching and learning

### **1.7 Want to know more?**

The HEA has developed some Guidance Notes to support the effective use of the Framework; these will be extended and amended over time. If you would like to know more, please go to <http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/ukpsf> for further information. Alternatively you can contact the UKPSF team directly by calling 01904 717 500.

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<sup>2</sup> It would not normally be possible to gain Principal Fellowship recognition through a specific educational programme  
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