Designing and implementing CPD Frameworks within research-intensive universities: advice from experience

ASPIRE Symposium, University of Exeter, 13th September 2013

Getting the green light

- Work with Senior Management from the outset, they are able to give decisions the green light and influence others.
- Take an evidence-based approach to support your arguments; use data from the sector: competitor activity has impact.
- Complement data collected with potential benefits for both the institution and individuals; HESA collection of data this year acted as a useful lever, but would not have been enough on its own.
- Time the development of your framework so that it will complement other L&T developments and even offer solutions.

Designing your framework

- Draw on existing advice, e.g. we drew on the HEA guidelines available online, information events relating to the UKPSF and accreditation, and helpful key questions via HEDG last year. Keep an eye out on mailing lists for useful resources as they emerge.
- Draw on existing experience and share ideas with colleagues elsewhere. Attend HEA and other events and talk to people who are doing the same as you.
- Involve stakeholders across the institution and invite their feedback during early discussions; involvement from HR is essential if CPD is to be truly embedded in institutional strategy and policy.
- Involve key staff from the Faculties from the earliest stages, particularly where different cultures, and therefore differing perspectives, exist.
- Ensure the design of the framework aligns with, and complements, existing structures and policies, for example criteria for promotion. This will require in-depth discussion across the institution and at a senior level, but will pay dividends in the long term for engagement because it will require less ‘selling’ and explanation, and will make sense to staff.
- Get involved in supporting staff in their direct applications for professional recognition; this is the best way to ensure that you’re fully in tune with the UKPSF and understand it, which is essential in designing an accredited CPD scheme.
- Use your experience in supporting staff with direct applications to gain an insight into what colleagues gain from the process of reflecting upon their practice, and what they find difficult, and use this to inform the design of your own scheme.
- Aim to have a number of Senior Fellows/Principal Fellows to support your scheme, to sit on panels etc. You may need to identify and support some senior staff with their applications in achieving this goal. If the design team themselves haven’t yet applied for professional recognition, they should make this a priority.
- Consider ways to reach busy staff: for example, aim to be flexible in the type of support offered, such as lunchtime sessions and drop-in writing workshops.
- Aim to offer a choice of submission formats for applicants, e.g. written and video.
- Design sustainability into your scheme or framework.
- An over-arching CPD framework offers flexibility in terms of the elements within it, so that additional routes can be added at a later date.

Preparing your submission or accreditation
- The narrative which forms the key part of your accreditation submission needn’t be overly long. At Reading our narrative was approximately 20 pages but this incorporated a new taught and non-taught route. The majority of the content was in the accompanying appendices and we then referenced the evidence throughout the narrative, which avoided repetition.
- The HEA also now publish the judgement criteria used by accreditation panels. Use the criteria to help structure your narrative and to ensure you meet all of the necessary requirements.
- Get feedback from the HEA. At Reading we used up our ‘free’ consultancy days* for this purpose – sending the draft documents to the HEA a week beforehand and then hosting a visit from Kathryn Harrison (Academic Development Officer, Accreditation and Consultancy, HEA) proved useful. Feedback was positive and this gave us a boost in reaching the final deadline. Although it means you need to have a good draft ready at least a month before the submission deadline, it meant that the final deadline was more easily reached.

*This process used both of the two consultancy days we are allowed at the University of Reading as a subscribing institution. The HEA allow one day for reviewing the draft documents ahead of a meeting, and one day for the consultancy meeting itself.

Implementing your framework
- Look for opportunities to communicate your message across the University. At Liverpool the University L&T Conference provided a useful opportunity to introduce the framework (keynote speech from Professor Janice Kay, University of Exeter).
- Consider running a pilot before you launch the framework across the institution. At Reading we are running four pilots in the first year across three different Faculties and the Library, before a full launch.

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