Enhancing and consolidating approaches to the reward and recognition of excellence in teaching at University of Glasgow

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**Project Team:**
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- Professor Alice Jenkins, Dean Learning & Teaching, Arts, Alice.jenkins@glasgow.ac.uk
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**Summary:**
For a research-intensive institution, the University of Glasgow has been relatively advanced in introducing initiatives which reward and recognise (R&R) teaching. There is, nonetheless, a lack of systematic approaches to R&R of excellence in teaching. As the phases of Maximising Academic Performance & Career Development (MAPCD) are rolled out across the University, it is timely to critically review and improve R&R approaches to teaching already in place. This LTDF project is part of a set of responses to teaching excellence currently underway at University of Glasgow aimed at consolidating appropriate and achievable criteria into a framework in which teaching excellence can be evidenced.

**Current Teaching Excellence Initiatives (Previous work)**
- A team from the University of Glasgow successfully applied to the Higher Education Academy (HEA) Recognising Excellence in Teaching (ReTe) change programme and are now initiating the processes towards such change. This programme focuses on teaching excellence criteria at level 10, with an aim to cascading the implications down to all the levels of the academic career. The ReTE change programme is a competitively awarded opportunity for an institutional team to initiate a large change in a given institution. The costs for this have been met by VP Learning & Teaching.
- The MAPCD project has been consistently focused on appropriate criteria for reward and recognition at different levels and stages of the academic career. Initial criteria relating to teaching have been outlined as part of this process.
- Additionally, Dr Vicky Gunn has a funded (£10,000) research project from the HEA, entitled: *Literature review on teaching excellence in Higher Education*.

**LTDF Project**
This LTDF project bid is a request for funding to enable the Teaching Excellence at Glasgow University programme team to analyse evidence collected as part of the ReTe project and, more significantly, expand the original ReTe project to include teaching excellence at all levels of the academic career and differential criteria appropriate to the various academic pathways. This LTDF project thus has three aspects:

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1 This on-going project has 4 phases: 1. Ensure the effective performance management and reward and recognition of Professorial level and Senior Administrative staff (level 10); 2. Facilitate the effective grading and reward of Professorial and Senior Administrative Staff across the University; 3. Review academic promotion criteria to include evidence-based quantitative and qualitative assessment; 4. Review academic probation in order to develop a holistic early career development path to support ‘new academics’.

2 [http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/change/RETE_12-13/RETE_info](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/change/RETE_12-13/RETE_info)

3 [http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/projects/detail/TE_Lit_Review_Excellence_in_T_and_L](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/projects/detail/TE_Lit_Review_Excellence_in_T_and_L)
1. Funding to transcribe and analyse interviews generated as part of HEA ReTe change programme (The ReTe programme does not cover these costs).
2. Expansion beyond the ReTe project from its focus on level 10 to a career-wide focus (with associated additional transcriptions).
3. Integration of recommendations from outcomes of this change programme with broader understanding of teaching excellence at all academic career levels

The purpose of this project would be to integrate the outcomes of the ReTE change project and this LTDF project into cross-College outcomes relevant to MAPCD, which feed into all academic promotions committees and offer an opportunity to enhance the teaching culture more generally.

**Overall Aims and Outcomes:**
To negotiate a more systematic and integrated approach to teaching excellence which focuses on:

1. Generating explicit criteria for promotions/ R&R pathways, ensuring College relevant criteria for excellence in teaching within a research-intensive environment. The aim would be to establish criteria that allow for the differentiation of quality teaching (as expected by all academics) and teaching excellence and leadership as required for any application of promotion through the university teacher track.
2. Drawing together the best of existing initiatives (eg a rigorous process for assessing our Teaching Excellence Award scheme) into a coherent structure for career development in which excellence in teaching (including the scholarship of learning and teaching) is valued equally to excellence in research.
3. Developing criteria for excellence which clarify the University’s interpretation of the UK Professional Standards (in teaching) Framework descriptors (1-4) as they will become articulated through the University of Glasgow’s CPD (teaching) framework.
4. Informing the work of Human Resources in the support of reward and recognition of teaching throughout the academic career.

**Alignment with University of Glasgow Strategies:**
This project is intrinsically linked to the Learning and Teaching Strategy’s strategic objective of *Excelling in Learning and Teaching*, as well as the institutional wide: MAPCD

**Scholarly base of this project**
This LTDF project draws on two HEA funded projects:

1. Dr Gunn’s: *Literature review on teaching excellence in Higher Education*. Emerging trends from this project so far indicate:
   - There is a lack of sophisticated conceptualization / definition of teaching excellence in higher education literature to date (since 2007). The most obvious results of this are: Firstly, institutions use research excellence paradigms as a framework to establish reward and recognition systems for teaching; secondly, methods for rewarding and recognizing teaching excellence emerge locally (discipline, school, College) which don’t necessarily articulate with criteria for promotion as established centrally and interpreted through College discipline-focused promotions’ committees (for this latter process see: Shephard, Kerry, Harland, Stein & Tidswell, 2011).
   - The absence of sophisticated theorizing is particularly acute in terms of leadership in teaching excellence.
   - There has been a shift in emphasis, with teaching excellence now being identified in terms of active research-teaching activities (Brew, 2007; Jenkins & Healey, 2007); Student engagement including facilitation of peer-peer work; Assessment regime change; Flexibility of provision and access to provision (Nichol, Hunter, Yaseen & Prescott-Clements, 2012); Engagement with the Scholarship of Teaching and
Learning; that SoTL which has students as co-investigators is particularly ‘excellent’ (Gale, 2007)

- There is some question over the efficacy of teaching awards for raising the status of teaching in universities (Macfarlane, 2011), as well as criticism of the lack of robust criteria relating to teaching awards (Chism, 2006; Symbaluk & Howell, 2010).


**Transferability achieved through key outputs:**
- Guidance for Human Resources and College promotions panels, in particular indicative promotions criteria and how they might be interpreted as relevant to different academic career pathways from level 7 to level 10;
- Guidance for academic staff wishing to apply for promotion on the basis of teaching excellence;
- A briefing sheet listing how commensurate universities elsewhere are engaging with reward and recognition of teaching excellence;

This change process will provide benchmarks for reward, recognition and promotions criteria regarding teaching across the University of Glasgow.

**Methodology**

The project team has designed a methodology which centres on current College priorities and needs. This means that how the process of change occurs will be slightly different in each College. However, certain activities have been identified as core to this change programme:

1. Clarifying perceptions and practices relating to teaching criteria;
2. Student engagement;
3. Revisiting formal teaching excellence criteria and opportunities necessary to meet them;
4. Linking outcomes to the University’s UKPSF CPD Framework;
5. Ensuring sustainability;

**Activity 1:**

*Clarifying perceptions and practices relating to teaching criteria for reward and recognition across campus*

1. Interviews with key staff within each of the Colleges. The team members are looking to extend from the ReTe project to undertake these interviews / focus groups relevant not just to level 10, but also to the other levels. They undertake this activity themselves. This LTDF bid requests funding for the transcription and analysis of the outcomes of these meetings.
2. Focus groups with academic staff: set of group discussions focused on realism of criteria, perceptions of interpretation of the criteria, and ways forward. These could be facilitated through offering the groups information on the UKPSF, the current criteria concerning teaching for all levels, the aims and objectives of MAPCD in relationship to support and development of teaching as well as an overview of professorial level understanding of criteria and implications for opportunities that need to be provided to meet these expectations. This will be especially needed to inform: the mentoring of academics across their careers and what activities and opportunities will need to be provided at different stages of the academic career if criteria are to be achievable.
3. Implementation of a cross-College short survey to identify values given to key categories of teaching excellence. This would include staff ranking of a range of criteria focusing on:
• Perceptions of which criteria are considered the most/least influential/weighty in terms of promotions decisions.
• Perception of potential of other criteria (designed out of the information from the Teaching Excellence review and also the UKPSF).

Undertake a comparison of the outcomes of these 3 activities and identify mismatches. The aims of this comparison are to: identify ways to raise appropriate expectations on the part of staff applying for promotions; provide line managers and mentors with clear advice on the opportunities necessary for staff to meet established criteria; inform review of current criteria around teaching excellence.

Activity 2:
Student engagement
Additionally to this, the team wishes to employ 4 student interns to work on integrating student views on teaching excellence within academic systems to reward and recognise teaching excellence. The focus of the interns’ work would be:
1. Comparison of key criteria of student excellence as identified in the Student-led teaching awards with the formalized criteria for teaching excellence within the institution’s Teaching Excellence Awards and outcomes of criteria for teaching excellence generated through the Teaching Excellence literature review;
2. Fully structured interviews with students focused on their concepts of ‘excellent’, ‘quality’, and ‘satisfactory’ teaching, and how these can be converted into meaningful, robust student-driven criteria not dependent solely on popularity;
3. Interactive workshops with students in which they work on defining excellent teaching and feedback, identifying effective teaching methods and learning interventions, and setting out how they think teaching could be delivered. These sessions will be used to provide insight into how students articulate their desired and actual learning experiences as well as what they consider to be satisfactory in terms of feedback, opportunities for personal development and intellectually stimulating teaching.

Activity 3:
Revisiting formal teaching excellence criteria and identifying range of opportunities necessary to meet them
• Working with relevant individuals at a College and a central level to recraft, where necessary, appropriate teaching excellence criteria across the University, including Heads of School, Heads of College, Heads of College HR, and central HR.
• Identifying where relevant opportunities are not currently provided/available/factored into workload models at the various levels of the academic career levels with an aim to instituting (and by implication resourcing) them.
• Feeding directly into the current working group looking at probationary requirements for early academic career researchers and teachers.

Activity 4:
Linking outcomes to the University’s UKPSF CPD Framework
Using the outcomes of these procedures to feed into the design of the University’s UK Professional Standards (Teaching) Continuing Professional Development Framework, currently initiated within the Learning and Teaching Centre’s Academic Development Unit. This will also assist in enabling the ADU to prioritise relevant forms of CPD support from within the Learning and Teaching Centre.

Activity 5:
Ensuring Sustainability
The University of Glasgow is reconsidering how performance is reviewed and measured across all levels of the academic career path. This proposed team would report into the
University career review group and inform developments around the diverse career tracks represented within the institution. The outcomes of this project could be incorporated into ongoing processes of P&DR, recruitment, development and career advancement as well as informing an institutional commitment to a CPD Framework.

**Activity 6:**
*Evaluation*

By developing an embedded, institution-wide process, evaluation will occur through establishing measureable key performance indicators concerning teaching/scholarship (To complement the KPIs the University of Glasgow currently has for research and the student experience).

The institution should also consider whether it is possible/desirable to include a question related to teaching excellence criteria and their achievability as part of career progression within the staff satisfaction survey.

**Timetables**

As this change process is already initiated, the timetable reflects both the present activity and the activity related to this LTDF bid.

**ReTe & HEA teaching excellence literature review timetable:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>April</th>
<th>May</th>
<th>June</th>
<th>Project</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HEA Change processes mgt Leeds</td>
<td>Ethics application; College representative on the project to do College-based interviews; initial focus groups. Report back to PI emerging views, trends, themes.</td>
<td>Identification of teaching excellence typology as suggested by current literature</td>
<td>ReTe</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Report to HEA</td>
<td>Report to HEA</td>
<td>HEA Literature Review</td>
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**LTDF Timetable:**

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<tr>
<th>Aug</th>
<th>Sept</th>
<th>Oct</th>
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<th>Jan</th>
<th>Feb</th>
<th>March</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recruit RA</td>
<td>Recruit student interns</td>
<td>Interns design fixed questions for their student interviews</td>
<td>Student intern data gathering, analysis and report (deadline: end Feb)</td>
<td>Transcribe interviews as part of ReTe process; Design appropriate questionnaire questions for staff</td>
<td>Follow up focus groups</td>
<td>Transcriptions</td>
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## Budget

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<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Cost</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>In kind costs</strong></td>
<td>Project team: All project members are committed to undertaking their role within their salaries and anticipate the following workload input:</td>
<td>Vicky, Alice, Moira 2.5 days per month each Anne &amp; Niamh 4 days per month each</td>
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<td><strong>Salary</strong></td>
<td>F/T RA (six months) To manage the interns; pull all the data sets together; transcribe data gathered; produce trend analysis; prepare the ethics application; support production of project report; respond to relevant requests from project team</td>
<td>£17,612 (mid pt, level 6 RA)</td>
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<td><strong>Student RA Positions</strong></td>
<td>4 Student RAs, 6 months (1 from each College)</td>
<td>Stipend: £600 x4 = £2,400</td>
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| Total                  |                                                                              | £20,012                                   |

## Approvals

Professor Frank Coton, VP Learning & Teaching  
Professor Neal Juster, Incoming Senior VP, Incoming Chair of MAPCD Phase 4