

Career Framework for University Teaching

Guidance for University Partners

Dr Ruth Graham, July 2016

Background

The Royal Academy of Engineering (RAEng) commissioned a study to improve the recognition of teaching excellence in higher education. The study is developing a transparent and robust framework for the evaluation of teaching achievement at all stages of the academic career, including appointment, promotion and professional development.

A pilot version of this framework – the *Career Framework for University Teaching* (the Framework) – was launched by the RAEng in February 2016. The Framework covers teaching and research (T&R) career pathways as well as education-focused pathways, and is designed for use across disciplinary, institutional and geographic contexts. Its development is informed by feedback from the international academic community, by educational research and by good practice from across the world. The Framework was also discussed at a meeting of international university partners held in February 2016. Further details on the Framework and the process by which it was developed are available at www.evaluatingteaching.com.

The next stage of the study is to evaluate how well the pilot Framework operates in practice. Working with university partners from across the world, feedback will be captured on the design, approach and impact of the Framework, thus enabling iterative refinements to be made. University partners will be drawn from institutions worldwide that are already engaged in internal discussion about reshaping their reward and/or appraisal processes with respect to teaching. Feedback from the university partners will be elicited between January 2016 and May 2017. It is anticipated that the second meeting of university partners will be held in February/March 2017.

University engagement

University partners can choose between two modes of engagement with the study:

Group 1. Feedback based on a review of the written Framework;

Group 2. Feedback based on piloting the Framework and/or using it to inform a revision of institutional reward and/or appraisal processes.

Taking each group in turn, this document provides broad information and guidance for current and potential university partners about the feedback they will offer to the study.

It should be noted that the university feedback is designed to improve the Framework and provide guidance on its implementation. Issues of confidentiality will be respected; no information relating to individual institutions will be published without the explicit agreement of the university concerned.

Group 1: Feedback based on reviewing the Framework

Group 1 universities are offering institutional feedback based on a review of the Framework document. They may wish to frame their feedback around the following questions:

1. Does the Framework have the potential to improve how teaching and learning is evaluated and recognised at your university? What particular benefits does the Framework offer?
2. To what extent is the Framework, in its current form, transferable to your institutional appointment, promotion and/or professional development processes? Is the Framework suitable for application across all disciplines offered at your university?
3. How could the design/approach of the Framework be improved? What factors (if any) would prevent you from adopting aspects of the Framework within your institution?
4. What potential exists to establish an international standard for university teaching, allowing teaching achievements to be 'portable', recognised in institutions across the world in a similar way to research achievements?

Where possible, feedback on the above questions should be based a range of views from across the institution. It would be helpful if these included representatives from HR, teaching and learning support functions, faculty at different career stages, promotion committee members, senior management and department heads. Each university can decide the most appropriate process by which this feedback should be captured.

Group 2: Feedback based on applying the Framework

Group 2 universities are providing feedback based on their experience of using the Framework in practice, either by piloting it or by using it to inform changes to their appointment, promotion and/or professional development processes.

Each Group 2 university will identify a point of contact for the study. Where requested, the consultant (Dr Ruth Graham) can provide support and advice to Group 2 universities for the application of the Framework within their institutional context. The process by which Group 2 universities engage with the study is likely to take a different form in each case, shaped by institutional protocols, priorities for change and the timing of their appointment, promotion and/or professional development processes. An illustrative example is provided below, highlighting the approach taken by one university already engaged in Group 2. In each case, the approach taken will be discussed and agreed with the university point of contact.

The RAEng is seeking up to six Group 2 universities where the consultant will capture in-depth feedback from a range of stakeholders involved both in implementing the pilot/new systems and using the Framework in practice. For this group of universities, it is anticipated that a small group of stakeholders (8–10 in total) would be targeted for these informal interviews, such as representatives from HR, teaching and learning support functions, faculty, promotion committee members, senior management and department heads.

Should a wider pool of universities wish to pilot or use the Framework, their feedback will be encouraged and welcomed. In particular, we will be inviting written feedback outlining their experience of applying the Framework.

Technical University of Denmark (DTU)

The Technical University of Denmark (DTU) is currently piloting the Framework within three of its departments: Computing and Mathematics, Nanotechnology, and Centre of Bachelor Engineering Studies. Starting in January 2016, the Framework has been used to both prepare and assess all appointment and promotion applications for shortlisted candidates in these departments. All candidates at Associate Professor level or above are expected to meet the criteria defined at the 'Skilled and Collegial teacher' level of the Framework. Two university points of contact were assigned for the study, one from the university HR function and one from the university teaching and learning unit.

From the university's perspective, there are a number of questions that they wish to address during the pilot process. These include:

- Could the Framework help candidates identify, collect and present evidence of their teaching achievements and (in turn) help promotion committees to make objective and consistent assessments of these achievements?
- Could the Framework help the university to define and recognise teaching achievement beyond the minimum threshold level, for those who have made more significant contributions to teaching and learning?
- Could the Framework help promotion/appointment candidates to recognise the different components of university teaching achievement at different stages of their academic career and therefore be better equipped to plan their professional development in teaching and learning?

The first candidates appointed to positions at DTU on the basis of this pilot will take up their posts from spring 2016. The project consultant will visit DTU in September/October 2016 to interview a range of stakeholders involved in the pilots, including appointment/promotion candidates, promotion committee members and university senior managers. During this visit, the consultant will also lead a workshop to review the university progression pathways, to which faculty, HR managers and educational managers from across the university will be invited.