

University of Twente, Netherlands

New institution-wide systems to recognise and reward teaching achievement

The University of Twente is a research-led and technology-focused university based in the Netherlands. Following a recent institution-wide reform of its bachelor programmes, the university is addressing how teaching excellence is nurtured, supported and rewarded among its academic staff. Consultations with the university's teaching community revealed two important challenges: firstly, teaching achievement was widely perceived to be a low priority within the university's reward and recognition processes; and secondly, the criteria and indicators of teaching achievement used in the promotion system were perceived to be narrow in scope and inconsistent in application.

To tackle these challenges, the university has undertaken a major overhaul of its academic reward, recognition and support systems in teaching and learning. The Career Framework for University Teaching has been used to inform and structure these reforms, which have allowed the university to introduce consistent and transparent definitions of teaching achievement across its appointment/promotion, recognition and professional processes.

The reforms underway are outlined below:

1. Appointment/promotion procedures: the university is establishing a more robust and transparent system for defining and rewarding the teaching achievements of academics during both appointment and promotion. The new policies will stipulate that all academics must fulfil the requirements of an 'effective teacher' (level 1 of the Framework). In addition, the university will enable the opportunity for career advancement (up to Full Professorship) on the basis of teaching achievement. Rather than creating a separate career pathway for academics who excel in education, the university will increase the flexibility of its existing research/teaching pathway to accommodate differing academic profiles depending on the balance of their teaching/research/service activities. Appointment or promotion of academics with an emphasis on education will have a strong relation with teaching

achievements.. For example, as illustrated in the Figure, a '75% education-focused' candidate would be promoted to Full Professorship if they could demonstrate research achievements equivalent to an Associate Professor level and teaching achievements in line with level 4 of the Framework.

- 2. Academic teaching qualifications:** for a number of years, in line with national government guidelines, the University of Twente has required all academics to gain a basic University Teaching Qualification (UTQ). Over the past year, the university has reframed the UTQ to align with the 'effective teacher' level of the Framework and has introduced a Senior University Teaching Qualification (SUTQ), which prepares for the 'scholarly teacher' level of the Framework. Unlike the UTQ, application for an SUTQ would be voluntary, driven by the interests and ambitions of the individual academic. A major focus of the SUTQ will be the development of a pedagogical community of practice and support among the awardees.
- 3. Professional development:** the university will also implement important changes to how teaching achievement is considered in its professional development and annual appraisal of academics. So, for example, in annual appraisal, academics will be assigned a score of 'low', 'medium' or 'high' against each of the promotion criteria for the relevant level of the Framework. These weightings will then be used to identify and explore opportunities to develop and advance the academic's approach and impact in teaching and learning.

Following a series of pilots and consultations in 2016 and 2017, the University of Twente will roll out these reforms during early 2018.

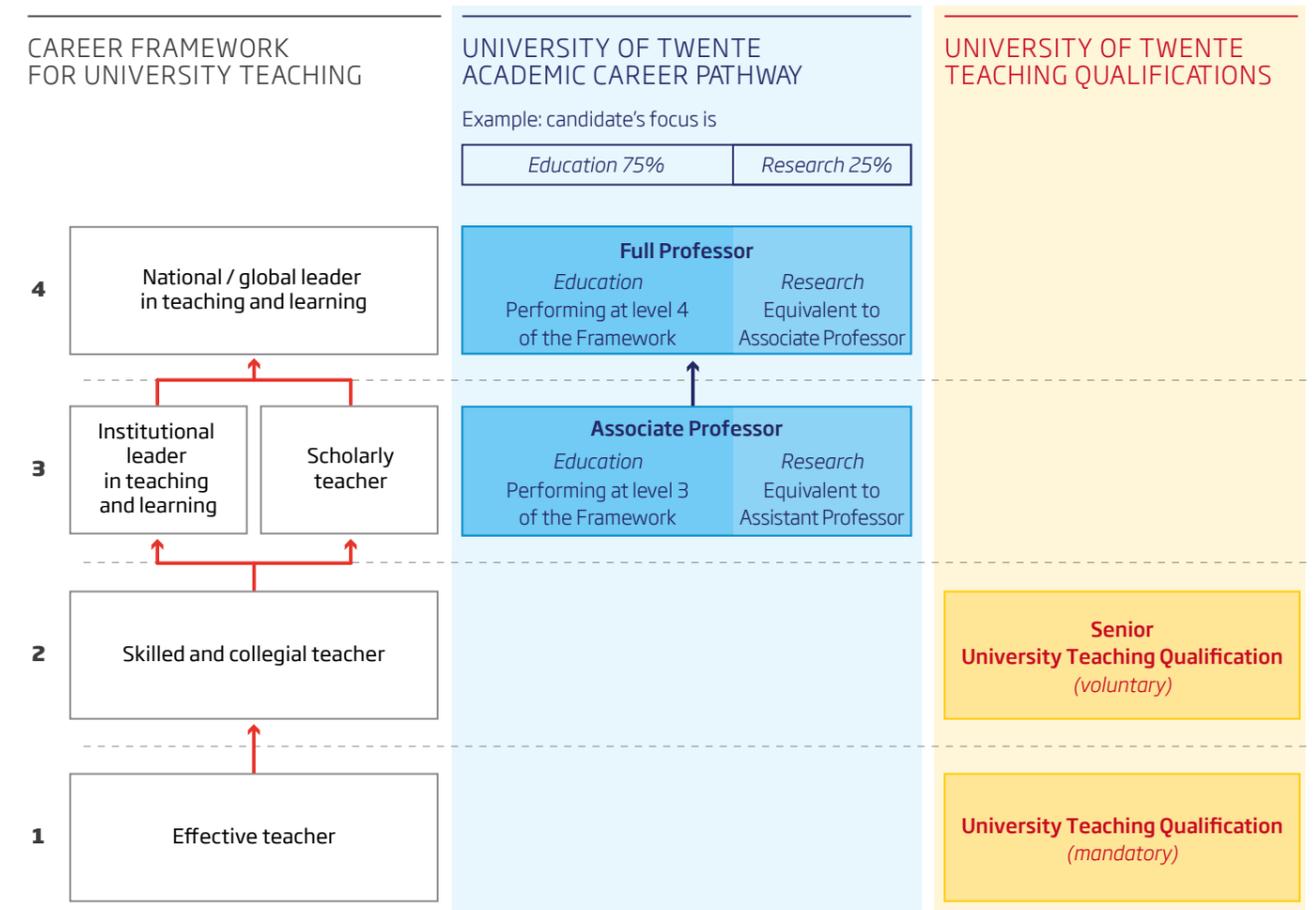


Figure: The relationship between the levels of the Career Framework for University Teaching and the levels of the University of Twente's new (i) single academic career pathway, where the candidate has selected to dedicate 75% of their promotion case on education; and (ii) university teaching qualifications, at the UTQ and SUTQ levels