

# University of New South Wales, Sydney

## Introduction of a new education-focused career pathway

Based in Australia, the University of New South Wales, Sydney (UNSW Sydney) is a research-intensive public university that is home to more than 50,000 students in subjects that span science, technology and professional disciplines. In 2015, it launched 'Strategy 2025', which aims to establish UNSW Sydney as 'Australia's global university', underpinned by world-class excellence in research and education. A major component of the educational mission of Strategy 2025 is to :

*"deliver a major cultural shift across the university by specifically valuing the excellence of our academics who undertake teaching. This will be achieved through support programs and clear policies, including those related to promotion".*

In mid-2017, following two years of review and international benchmarking, UNSW Sydney launched a new education-focused (EF) academic career pathway. As Professor Anne Simmons, the lead of the working party that introduced the EF pathway, explained: *"the EF model recognises and values the skills of academics who excel at teaching and learning and provides a clear career path for them to progress through the academic ranks."* The EF pathway was designed to offer a parity of esteem and opportunity with the university's research-focused and more established research/teaching career pathways. Indeed, academics would be free to move laterally between these three promotion pathways if their priorities and areas of focus shift during the course of their career.

The Career Framework for University Teaching played an important role in shaping the design of the EF pathway, through both offering a definition of progressive levels of teaching achievement and identifying pathways for advancement. The relationship between the Framework's levels and the five steps in the EF career pathway at UNSW Sydney is illustrated in the Figure. As Professor Simmons noted: *"[the Framework's] levels informed the roles and expectations of Level A through E academics within the context of an EF career at UNSW, and helped UNSW to articulate the career progression options of an EF academic."*

Less than a year after the launch of the EF pathway, more than 200 UNSW Sydney academics have already been accepted into EF roles, representing 11% of the university's academic population; the university plans for this figure to rise to 25% by 2025. Feedback from across the university suggests that this growing cohort of education-focused academics is already having a profound and positive impact on the culture, status and quality of teaching and learning at UNSW Sydney.

Those closest to the implementation of the EF pathway make clear, however, that simply introducing these new career opportunities is only one part of the story. Equally important have been the measures introduced by the university to support and advance this community. For example:

- » EF academics are provided with teaching innovation grants and sabbaticals to support exploration, academic visits and the development of new ideas in teaching and learning.
- » Promotion policies have been revised to allow EF academics to progress through to Full Professor.
- » A strong focus has been placed on establishing a community of support across the growing population of EF academics, including events, educational retreats and small group workshops.
- » EF academics are provided with dedicated coaching and professional development in teaching and learning.

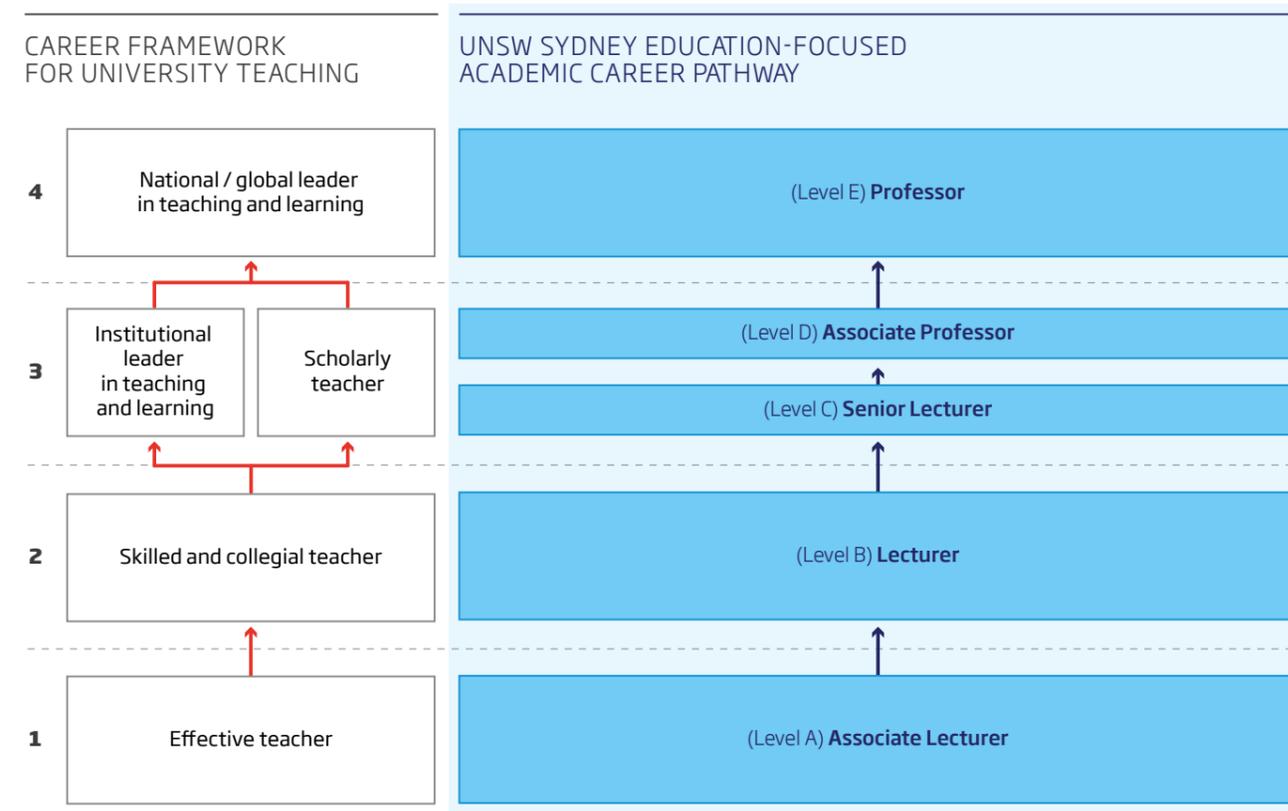


Figure: The relationship between the levels of the Career Framework for University Teaching and the levels of UNSW Sydney's new education-focused career pathway