NATIONAL FORUM
FOR THE ENHANCEMENT OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

National Professional Development Framework
for
All Staff Who Teach in Higher Education

Version July 2016

Introduction and Aims

This document describes the newly articulated *National Professional Development Framework* for all those who teach[1] in Irish higher education. The framework provides guidance for the professional development (PD) of individuals and gives direction to other stakeholders (e.g. institutions, higher education networks, educational/academic developers, policy makers and student body representatives) for planning, developing and engaging in professional development activities.

This PD framework aims to:
- Empower staff to create, discover and engage in meaningful personal and professional development in a variety of ways: i.e. accredited; structured non-accredited; unstructured non-accredited; collaborative non-accredited
- Encourage staff to engage in peer dialogue and support in their professional development activities
- Encourage staff to engage students in their learning
- Develop the pedagogy of their discipline[2] for relevance and authenticity and enable learning from other disciplines
- Assist staff to reflect on, plan and contribute to evidence-based[3] enhancement and transformation of their teaching and learning approaches
- Assist in the quality enhancement and assurance of the student learning experience

The PD framework is flexible and inclusive and can be interpreted and adapted for: academic staff across disciplines; educational/learning technologists; educational/academic developers; research staff, library staff, support staff and students who teach.

The importance of the local context within which teaching takes place is also fully recognised. This framework is designed to be interpreted in a way that reflects the local priorities within which each individual operates. Although the focus is on individual staff, the framework does not preclude teams or groups of staff to also use it for group-based learning development.

The framework is underpinned by a number of values i.e. *inclusivity, authenticity, scholarship, learner-centeredness and collaboration.* These guide the personal and professional development processes used by individual staff, academic departments and institutions to recognise, inform, enhance and sustain professional development.

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[1] 'Teach' used in this document is inclusive of all the activities involved in the teaching and facilitation of student learning. The term incorporates the principles of student engagement in the learning process.
[2] Discipline is used in this framework to encompass the individual's discipline or subject, however it is also used to include other professional groups (i.e. educational developers, educational/learning technologists).
3. Defined as *' evidence-based refers to any concept or strategy that is derived from or informed by objective evidence—most commonly, educational research or metrics of school, teacher, and student performance'.*

Typology of Professional Development Activities

The typology of the professional development opportunities incorporated in the framework includes both accredited, structured and non-structured non-accredited activities (Table 1).

Table 1: Typology of Professional Development Activities

| Non- Accredited			Accredited
Collaborative Non-Accredited	**Unstructured Non-Accredited**	**Structured Non - Accredited**	
(Informal)[4]	(non-formal)	(non-formal)	(formal)
Learning from these activities comes from their collaborative nature – in this case professional development is not a commodity to be consumed, it is developed through the collaborative process	These activities are independently led by the individual. Engagement is driven by the individuals needs/interests. Individuals source the material themselves.	Organised activities (by an institution, network, and disciplinary membership body). They are typically facilitated and have identified learning objectives.	Accredited programmes of study (ECTS or similar credits)
Examples – Conversations with colleagues, peer networking, peer observations, online blogs/discussion forums	Examples - Reading articles, following social media, self-study, watching video tutorials, keeping a reflective teaching journal/portfolio, preparing an article for publication	Examples - Workshops, seminars, MOOCs, conferences, summer schools, Peer learning or structured collaborative projects	Examples - Professional certificate, Graduate Diploma, Master, PhD in: Teaching and Learning, eLearning, Leadership in Education; Education Policy

Types of Learning

Staff who teach develop their knowledge, skills and competencies in their teaching through a range of learning activities. Each learning activity can be described by different types of learning alone or in combination. The framework identifies and recognises four types of learning associated with any professional development learning activity ('*new learning', 'consolidating learning', 'mentoring'* and *'leading'*).

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[4] **Informal learning** is defined as non-conscious learning, it is not measured against a construct, and there are no criteria for progression. There may be a learning objective but there is no judgement or evaluation
Non-formal learning is always organised, structured and engaged in consciously . There may be a learning objective but there is no judgement or evaluation
Formal learning is always organised, structured and engaged in consciously it has clear learning objectives and is judged and evaluated for recognised credit.
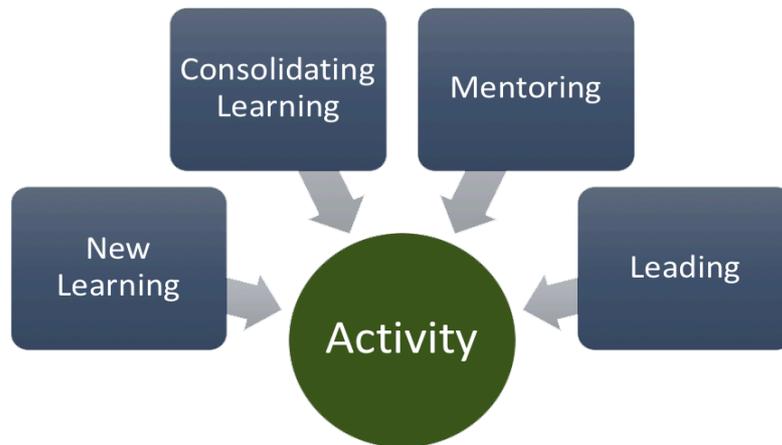
Figure 1: Types of learning

The Domains of the Framework

The framework incorporates five overarching domains, each expanded through a series of elements. The uniqueness that each individual brings to their teaching is acknowledged by placing 'the self' (Domain 1 Personal Development) at the centre of all professional development activity (Figure 2).

Figure 2: The Domains, underpinned by the framework's values.

The domains and their elements provide a framework to guide staff to review their current knowledge, skills and competencies, regardless of how, where, when these skills have been developed and to set plans for their future professional development needs. These can also can be used by institutions nationally to support the development of professional development opportunities for those who teach in higher education.

All five domains refer to the activities that staff engage in as part of their teaching (including assessment and feedback activity) and the impact that these have on

their students' learning. The development of an individual's engagement with the scholarship of teaching and learning is an integral component of each domain.

Domain 1: Personal Development: The 'Self' in Teaching and Learning

Description
This domain emphasises the personal values, perspectives and emotions that individuals bring to their teaching, including self-awareness, confidence, life experience and the affective aspects associated with teaching. It makes transparent the importance of the personal values that underpin any human interaction especially those needed for authentic, engaged teaching. In addition, this domain encourages the exploration of the positive and negative emotions and personal characteristics that impact on teaching, e.g. confidence, enthusiasm, commitment, anxiety, frustration. This domain plays an important role in helping staff to understand and declare their teaching philosophy and approach. It recognises the importance of wellbeing, authenticity and genuine connection and the important impact these have on the individual teaching and learning roles.

Domain 1: Elements

1.1 Identification and reflection on the key personal characteristics (values, perspectives and emotions) that motivate and challenge teaching, learning and scholarship and may impact on student learning.

1.2 Reflection on prior learning experiences and life experiences that contribute, or are barriers, to teaching, i.e. prior experience and knowledge: as a student, as a teacher, as a researcher, in personal life.

1.3 Articulation of a personal philosophy of and approach to teaching

1.4 Awareness of the extent to which personal philosophy aligns with current institutional, national and international context and associated values.

Domain 2: Professional Identity, Values and Development in Teaching and Learning

Description
This domain emphasises the importance of the development and self-evaluation of professional/disciplinary identity and its associated roles, responsibilities and action plans. It encourages staff to consider their professional and/or disciplinary identity in their context and at a particular point in time (for example, an academic staff member, an educational technologist, learning support staff who teach, etc.). This domain supports the development of staff's critical reflection skills, evaluation of their teaching and particularly emphasises the importance of the development of the scholarship of teaching and learning. Some key professional values are identified. The importance of planning for professional development activities in institutional or other contexts is also highlighted as part of this domain.

Domain 2: Elements

2.1 Articulation of a professional/disciplinary identity, including current roles and responsibilities, and identification of unique features of current roles and responsibilities that potentially impact on teaching and learning practices, e.g. external examining, industry liaison, outreach activities, technological competence, information literacy development.
2.2 Evaluation of teaching and impact on student learning, based on self/peer review/peer observation and/or other evidence.
2.3 Awareness of and contribution to the scholarship of teaching and learning, through sharing of practice, developing evidence-based approaches, research into, dissemination and/or application of research on teaching and learning.
2.4 Enactment of professional values, such as:
respect for individuals and groups of diverse learners and staff; awareness of and promotion of ethical values and behaviour; promotion of participation of student learners; advancement and advocacy of discipline; sharing of resources; developing collegiality; identifying unconscious gender bias; commitment to reflective and evidence-based practice; citizenship (contributing to the institution/society's ethical and civic purpose).
2.5 Development and monitoring of an evidence-based, reflective professional development learning plan for their context.

Domain 3: Professional Communication and Dialogue in Teaching and Learning

Description
At the core of this domain is the importance of excellent, clear and coherent communication skills required for the changing learning environment. It emphasises the key skills of written/verbal/visual communication, listening, dialogue and collaboration with others in the professional learning process. It recognises the importance of teaching and learning in a community, to enhance student learning. The social dimension of professional learning is emphasised and it recognises the role that communities of practice and networks have in supporting this locally, nationally and internationally; within and across disciplines.

Domain 3: Elements

3.1 Development of academic and other forms of writing and enquiry skills to enhance both one's own and students' learning, i.e. academic communication (journal articles, report writing, policy/procedures); general professional communication skills (email, social media), technical communication skills (curriculum/module descriptions, exam/assessment instructions, reports and proposals).

3.2 Development of engaging verbal and non-verbal communication (formal and in-formal) and listening skills required for different situations and environments (with/to students, with teams, across institutions, with peers, with media, industry).

3.3 Commitment to ensuring excellence, clarity, coherence and precision in all forms of communication.

3.4 Development of peer, group and team-working skills for the enhancement of teaching, learning and scholarship, e.g. curriculum team discussion, on-line forums/communities on teaching and learning, constructive peer review of teaching/research, team-teaching.

3.5 Commitment to the development of communicative learning communities with peers/colleagues (disciplinary and interdisciplinary)

3.6 Exploration of and engagement in dialogue with international and national communities /partners to enhance teaching.

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Domain 4: Professional Knowledge and Skills in Teaching and Learning

Description

This domain emphasises the importance of both disciplinary knowledge and approaches to teaching (disciplinary pedagogies), while also drawing on inter-disciplinary experiences and approaches. It supports an active student role in the learning process, moving toward a partnership in the teaching and learning process, essential in the higher education environment. It incorporates staff's capacity to design and implement innovative and creative teaching and learning approaches at different levels of curriculum. The importance of assessment and feedback is emphasised, in particular the move to a more learner-oriented and dialogic feedback approach for students. The role of underpinning theories of learning, staff's knowledge and contribution to teaching and learning policies, procedures and scholarship is also highlighted.

Domain 4: Elements

4.1 Relevancy and currency of disciplinary/subject knowledge, e.g. through research, literature searches, dialogue with peers, industry/placement experiences, industry projects, professional body memberships, etc.

4.2 Supportive of active student-centred approaches to learning that engages students and builds towards students as partners in their learning.

4.3 Design and management of sessions, modules and/or curricula (programmes) appropriate to the learning environment.

4.4 Development and application of appropriate teaching and learning approaches from one's own discipline and other disciplines that support the development of students' knowledge, their skills of enquiry and other stated institutional graduate attributes (e.g. critical, creative, entrepreneurial, responsible, collaborative, etc.).
4.5 Application of appropriately aligned assessment and learner-oriented feedback approaches, from one's own discipline and, where relevant, from other disciplines.
4.6 Knowledge of and application of the theories of how students learn within and across disciplines, and responsiveness to the needs of diverse cohorts of students.
4.7 Exploration and application of inclusive, innovative, enquiry-based, problem-based and creative approaches to student learning.
4.8 Knowledge of and contribution to relevant teaching and learning policies and procedures in local, national and international higher education contexts.

Domain 5: Professional and Personal Digital Capacity in Teaching and Learning
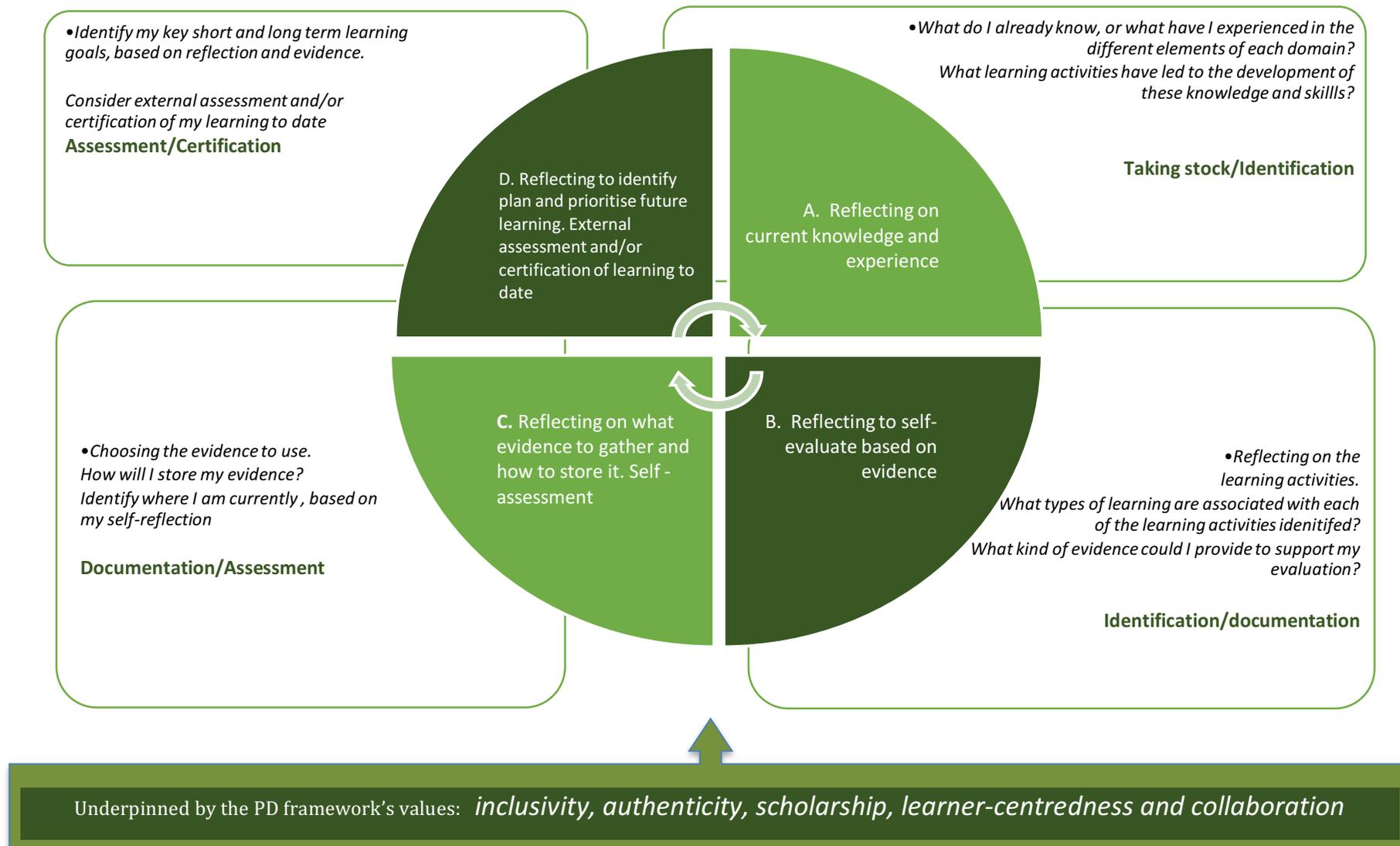
Description
This domain emphasises the importance of personal and professional digital capacity and the application of digital skills and knowledge to professional practice. The domain supports the development of personal confidence in digital skills to develop professional competence and the identification of opportunities for technology to advance and enhance student learning. This domain is underpinned by the National Digital Skills Framework for Education.

Domain 5: Elements

5.1 Awareness of the key digital aspects and opportunities on the higher education landscape and adoption of an evidenced-based approach to the application of technology in the design of learning for students (Teach and Learn)
5.2 Application of educational and day-to-day tools and resources to support personal learning, teaching and scholarship (Tools and Technologies)
5.3 Application of technologies for effective communication and collaboration with student, professional and social communities (Communication and Collaboration)
5.4 Use of digital tools to create and develop new learning materials, embedding a range of media and interactive resources (Create and Innovate)
5.5 Application of digital search strategies, skills and knowledge of the issues around the sharing and copyrights of digital resources (Find and Use)
5.6 Consideration of personal and other's wellbeing and awareness of the nature of the online identity, data and information, privacy and protection, in ways that are ethical and respectful (Identity & Wellbeing).

Evidence-based Reflection

At its core the framework is underpinned by a reflective evidence-based approach to professional development of those who teach in higher education. Guided by the values, types of learning and domains, the framework encourages a cyclical reflective process. This process includes evidence-based self-evaluation on learning activities and supports individuals in A) reflecting on current knowledge and experience; B) reflecting to self-evaluate, based on evidence; C) reflecting on what evidence to gather and how to store it; D) reflecting to identify, plan and prioritise future learning (See Figure 3).

•Identify my key short and long term learning goals, based on reflection and evidence.

Consider external assessment and/or certification of my learning to date
Assessment/Certification

•What do I already know, or what have I experienced in the different elements of each domain? What learning activities have led to the development of these knowledge and skillls?

Taking stock/Identification

D. Reflecting to identify plan and prioritise future learning. External assessment and/or certification of learning to date

A. Reflecting on current knowledge and experience

C. Reflecting on what evidence to gather and how to store it. Self - assessment

B. Reflecting to self- evaluate based on evidence

•Choosing the evidence to use. How will I store my evidence? Identify where I am currently , based on my self-reflection

Documentation/Assessment

•Reflecting on the learning activities. What types of learning are associated with each of the learning activities idenitifed? What kind of evidence could I provide to support my evaluation?

Identification/documentation

Underpinned by the PD framework's values: *inclusivity, authenticity, scholarship, learner-centredness and collaboration*

Figure 3: Cycle of Evidence-based Reflection and Planning for individual staff

The professional development framework for those who teach in Irish higher education articulated in this document is designed to bring coherence through synthesis to the range of accredited and non-accredited provision already available throughout the sector. It attempts to describe the breadth of teaching, learning and scholarship activities in a modern higher education environment.

For further information on the consultation process and the ongoing implementation of the professional development framework across the higher education sector please visit www.teachingandlearning.ie.