

MAPPING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PATHWAYS  
FOR THOSE WHO TEACH IN IRISH HIGHER EDUCATION:  
WHERE ARE WE NOW AND WHERE DO WE WANT TO GO?



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

# DRAFT

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## **Mapping Professional Development Pathways for those who Teach in Irish Higher Education: Where are we now and where do we want to go?**

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National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education  
c/o 19 Dawson Street, Dublin 2, Ireland

T: +353 1 6090648

Email [admin@teachingandlearning.ie](mailto:admin@teachingandlearning.ie)

Web: [www.teachingandlearning.ie](http://www.teachingandlearning.ie)

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## Chair and Director's Preface

The creation of an Irish professional development framework for teaching in higher education (HE) has been a core strand of the National Forum's work since its inception. This process has been, and will continue to be, informed by the Forum's parallel research findings from the national roadmap for building digital capacity *Teaching and Learning in Irish Higher Education: A Roadmap for Enhancement in a Digital World 2015-2017 (February 2015)*, findings from the National Seminar Series on 'Teaching for Transitions', and findings from the Learning Impact Awards. While each are separate initiatives with their own unique purpose, when we talk about continuing professional development (CPD) in teaching we are also talking about staff's digital literacies, and when we talk about supporting excellent teaching we must listen to what students value. If you have participated in a Sectoral Dialogue, voiced your opinion in the Digital Capacity consultations, or nominated someone as a Teaching Hero, you have already begun to participate in the creation of an Irish professional development framework for teachers in higher education.

There is a wealth of sectoral activity around professional development. We start from a foundation of commitment and a history of hard work across the sector and we build on what has already been achieved by our colleagues. Many institutions and institutional consortia throughout the sector have made significant contributions to the development, enhancement and accreditation of higher education teaching skills. NAIRTL<sup>1</sup> initiated prestigious National Teaching Awards, LIN<sup>2</sup> focused on a cross-sectoral approach to accredited modules, EDIN<sup>3</sup> prioritised the enhancement of the skills of educational developers, ILTA<sup>4</sup> and NDLR<sup>5</sup> made a huge contribution to the enhancement of IT skills across the sector. It is upon these initiatives, amongst others, that the Forum's work begins.

The overarching purpose of this report is to inform a sectoral consultation on an emerging framework. In addition it is a resource which brings together information on professional development within higher education. The research undertaken reflects the Forum's commitment to evidence-based and evidence-informed policy and practice. We now have a snapshot of professional development activity across universities, institutes of technology and the private sector in Irish higher education. With that snapshot in hand, we can see what we have focused on in the professional development of those who teach, and we can identify any potential gaps in professional development offerings. We also have drawn from international expertise to generate an overview on what countries and higher education institutions around the world are doing to support professional development in teaching. In addition to accessing publicly available reports we have spoken to key stakeholders who were involved in critical processes of change in their national contexts. From those narratives we are able to learn from and build upon the experiences of our international counterparts.

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1 National Academy for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning

2 Learning Innovation Network

3 Educational Developers in Ireland Network

4 Irish Learning Technology Association

5 National Digital Learning Resources

Briefly then, this document

1. Provides a general foundation for the Forum's national sectoral consultation phase for creating a professional development framework for teaching roles in Irish higher education.
2. Provides a strong evidence base and overview of professional development frameworks internationally and of professional development activity nationally.

This report shares the Forum's significant primary and secondary research driven by the single question: 'What national professional development structures can be created to recognise, enhance, inform and sustain excellent teaching practice that supports/enhances student learning in a diversity of contexts?' Within this document we will raise key issues to inform the national consultation for the emerging professional development framework. A summary version of this report is also available.

We would like to recognise the excellent work that has given rise to this consultation document, led by Dr Eloise Tan in partnership with Dr Niamh Rushe and Dr Catherine O'Mahony and supported by Elizabeth Noonan and the National Forum Board.

The evidence and questions it presents provide a strong springboard for the sectoral discussions to follow.

Again none of this work would have been possible without the committed participation from so many colleagues across the sector.

**Prof. Sarah Moore (Chair), Dr Terry Maguire (Director)**

**National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education**

## Section 1: Purpose and context

### 1.0 Introduction

**'Mapping Professional Development Pathways for Teachers in Irish Higher Education'** aims to inform and guide the articulation of a national professional development framework for those who play a teaching role in Irish higher education. It draws on the research carried out by the National Forum team and provides a prelude to a series of sectoral consultation sessions which will aim to develop a national framework. It proposes possible objectives and challenges for the national framework and suggests some initial guiding questions for stakeholders that are likely to be further developed during sectoral consultations. The subtitle of this report asks, 'Where are we now and where do we want to go?'. To answer that question it became clear that we needed to know what professional development structures currently exist in Ireland, what professional development frameworks have countries or professional bodies adopted worldwide, and most importantly – what dimensions of teaching should a framework address? The following research activities (Figure 1) were undertaken by the National Forum team and their key findings are presented within this document. The full background, methodology, and findings of these research projects will be published separately, for those who are interested.

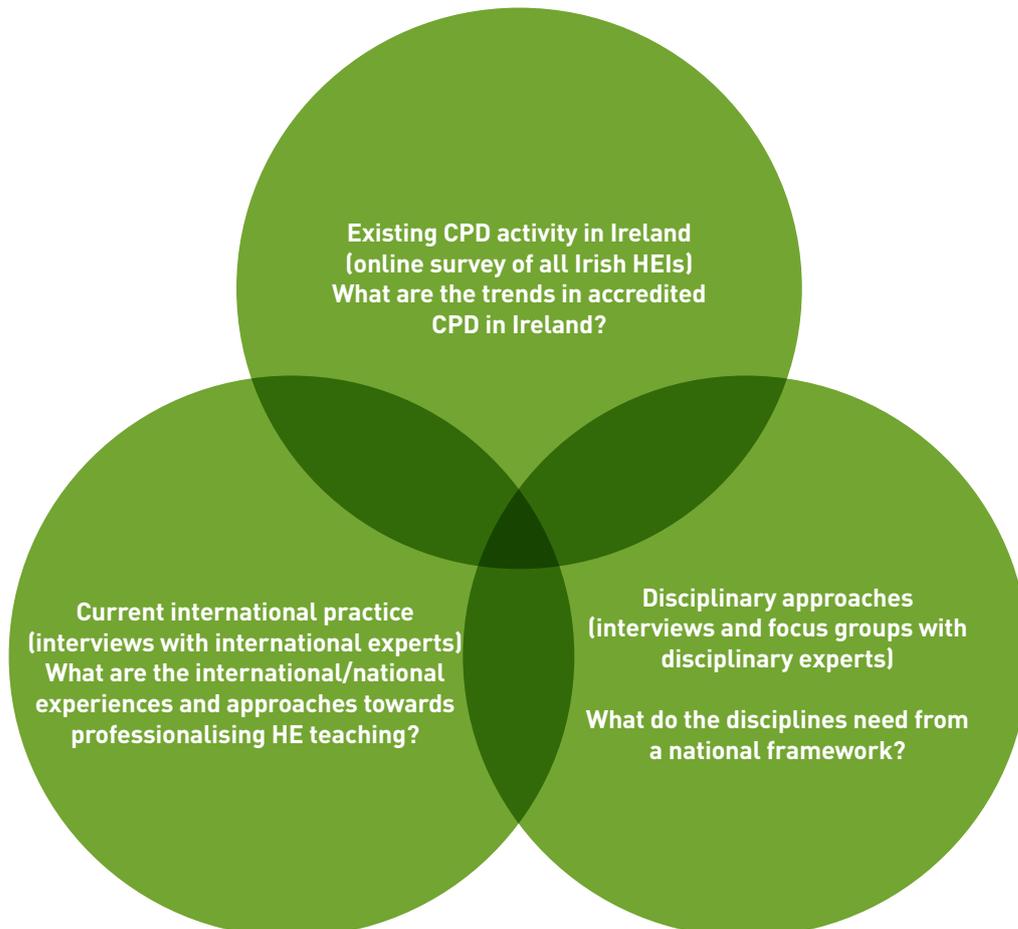


Figure 1. Summary of professional development research projects completed by the Forum

Within this document we will share relevant findings and discuss what implications these might have for an emerging professional development framework. This document is a first step in helping to figure out what path we choose to set ourselves for a professional development framework that enhances teaching in Irish higher education. It is a document meant to provide those who participate in the national consultation with a shared understanding of where we are starting from, so that the consultations can be as fruitful as possible.

### 1.1 What is professional development?

To understand what a professional development framework is (what its purpose might be, and what it might look like, what the benefits are), first let us set out what we mean by professional development in relation to teaching in higher education. Within this document, professional development encompasses ‘formal courses and programs in professional education and to the formal and informal development of professional skill that occurs in the work-place’ (Dall’Alba and Sandberg, 2006, p.384). Based on this definition, professional development for those who teach in Irish higher education can refer to engagement with accredited modules or programmes, participating in a workshop, presenting at a conference, or undertaking pedagogical research, to name a few common professional development activities teachers undertake. While all these activities may be considered professional development, they can have different underlying values about what it means to engage in professional development. Kennedy (2005) sets out nine models of professional development across a spectrum moving towards what she refers to as ‘increased capacity for professional autonomy’.

**Table 1. Kennedy’s (2005, p. 248) spectrum of CPD models**

Model of CPD	Purpose of model
The training model The award-bearing model The deficit model The cascade model	Transmission
The standards-based model The coaching/mentoring model The community of practice model	Transitional
The action research model The transformative model	Transformative

These nine models are not mutually exclusive and a professional development framework might recognise a range of activities across these models. What is key in the table above is that professional development activities are designed with different purposes; some aim to transmit knowledge to practitioners, others to scaffold and support transitions, and others to transform practice. Just as we use varying combinations of transmission/transitional/transformative methods when teaching our students, professional development activities combine to do the same for teachers. Central to the Forum’s vision for a national professional

development framework for teachers in higher education is a framework built upon an understanding that CPD ‘nurtures the expert within’ rather than filling ‘empty vessels’ by transmitting knowledge about teaching (Dadds, 1997).

## 1.2 What is a professional development framework?

The concept of a framework to guide and provide recognition for professional development activities has a long-standing tradition in disciplinary professions such as law, medicine, engineering and nursing. While professional bodies have much to offer in terms of their experience with structured frameworks, they also face similar challenges to motivating individuals to participate in professional development, such as time and perceived benefit of engagement.

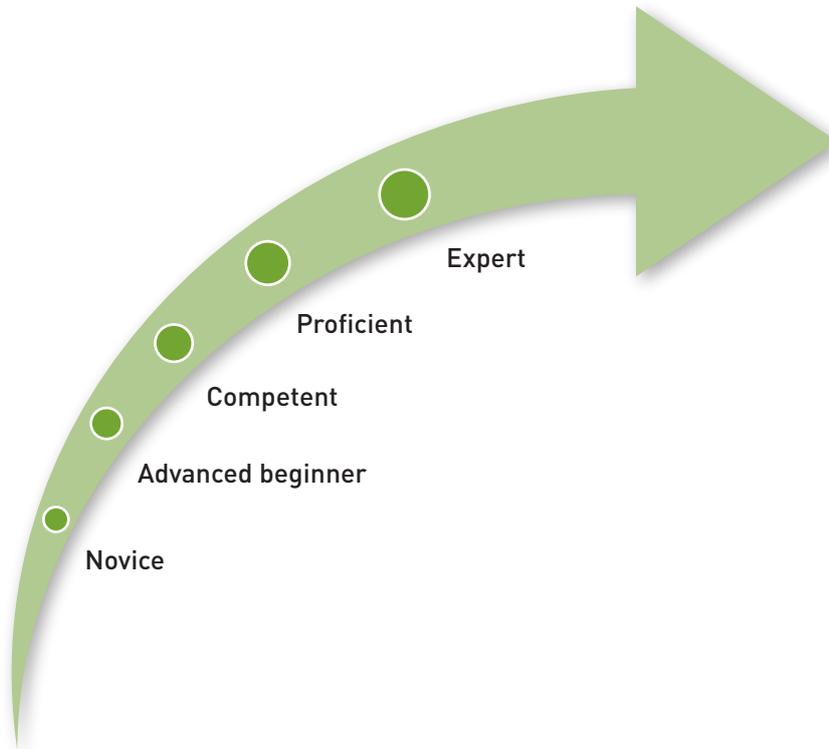
A professional development framework is a system that provides individuals with potential routes for their continuing professional development in specific domains and usually involves some form of professional recognition for an individual’s assessed achievements. The assessed achievements can result from participation in a range of CPD activities (see Kennedy’s Spectrum of CPD in Table 1). The domains addressed in a professional development framework might be technical, theoretical and/or practical.

**Table 2. Possible domains for a professional development framework for teaching in higher education**

Domain	Professional practice/ skills	Professional knowledge	Professional values/ attributes
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reflective practice</li> <li>- Integration of research, teaching and learning</li> <li>- Online pedagogy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Theories of education</li> <li>- Scholarship of teaching and learning</li> <li>- Digital literacy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Inclusive pedagogy</li> <li>- Commitment to civic engagement</li> <li>- Leadership</li> </ul>

Usually these routes and domains are established and agreed upon by governing membership bodies. In the case of teaching in Irish higher education, the Forum proposes that these routes and domains be established and agreed upon through national consultation with all stakeholders in higher education teaching: students, lecturers, administrators, policy bodies, disciplinary groups, teaching and learning networks.

Professional development frameworks can take a variety of formats, perhaps the most familiar format being a linear or staged progression from novice to expert practitioner, with a focus on acquisition of skills with increasing difficulty (Benner, 1984). While the linear model from novice to expert is the most familiar (Figure 2), its focus on skill acquisition/development falls short of encompassing the reflective and iterative nature of teaching. We recognise that teaching is more than the acquisition of skills and that engagement with teaching over time is more complex than a linear progression from novice to expert.



**Figure 2. Example of linear progression**

Teaching is both an art and a science and the scholarship of research that relates to teaching is constantly evolving. Later in this document we will explore models of professional development in other national contexts. With this in mind we envision that through a national consultation we can collectively inform a model for a national professional development framework that encompasses the complexity and diversity in higher education teaching.

### **1.3 Why do we need a professional development framework for teachers in Irish higher education?**

#### **Policy context: a national response to an issue of global concern**

*Excellent teachers are made, not born; they become excellent through investment in their teaching abilities.*

(European Science Foundation, 2012, p.vii)

Teaching in higher education has become the focus of serious international attention. International and European bodies such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), European Commission, and European Science Foundation are asking what higher education institutions are doing to

ensure quality teaching, and how they are actively and strategically preparing staff for teaching in higher education. Globally, there is a growing awareness about the need for professional development pathways that provide recognition for those engaged in teaching and learning and that serve as a mechanism for enhancing the quality of teaching across entire higher education sectors. In relation to the importance of professional development for teachers, the 2013 European Commission (EC) report on *Improving the Quality of Teaching and Learning in Europe's Higher Education Institutions* made clear recommendations:

*Recommendation 1: Public authorities responsible for higher education should ensure the existence of a sustainable, well-funded framework to support higher education institutions' efforts to improve the quality of teaching and learning...*

*Recommendation 4: All staff teaching in higher education institutions in 2020 should have received certified pedagogical training. Continuous professional education as teachers should become a requirement for teachers in the higher education sector.*

(European Commission, 2013, p.64)

The High Level Group on the Modernisation of Higher Education report to the European Commission is one of many international reports which focus on the need to professionalise teaching in higher education (European Science Foundation, 2012; Norton, 2013; OECD, 2010). However the quality enhancement discourse is not the sole motivating factor behind the push to professionalise teaching in higher education. There is now a clear recognition that parity between teaching and research must be reflected in how higher education values teaching on a daily basis. While student evaluations provide feedback on an educator's teaching, besides annual teaching awards there is no clear Irish system for recognising those who invest their time and effort into enhancing their teaching over their career. Educators, even experienced educators, may benefit from knowing what excellent teaching is, what it looks like, how they can achieve it, what it means for their discipline and what it means for their individual context.

Ireland was highlighted alongside the UK, Belgium, and the Netherlands as a leading example of a country taking steps towards implementing national policy initiatives in the area of professionalising teaching (European Science Foundation, 2012). Within the Irish higher education policy context, the *National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030* recommends that 'All higher education institutions must ensure that all teaching staff are both qualified and competent in teaching and learning, and should support on-going development and improvement of their skills' (Department of Education and Skills (DES), 2011, p.62). While this statement seems simple in its goals and most would agree that teaching staff should be 'qualified and competent in teaching and learning', it raises many questions for the Irish higher education sector related to the development, management, and sustainability of such a framework.

### 1.3.1 Quality assurance and quality enhancement

Other policy guidelines and directives that have impacted upon national policy development relating to the quality of teaching and learning are linked to the ongoing Bologna process.<sup>6</sup>

The European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)<sup>7</sup> has evolved from the Bologna process. The ESG has informed the development of national policies and quality assurance guidelines that currently exist. The guidelines refer to internal and external quality assurance systems. The quality assurance of teaching and learning and the appraisal and development of staff is a key element for all HEIs in the context of the internal quality system. The ESG seven elements are embedded in the internal quality assurance systems for all HEIs recognised by the state. HEIs have invested significantly in the development of robust internal quality systems. These systems were peer reviewed by the independent external quality assurance agencies<sup>8</sup> between 2008 and 2013 (41 Irish higher education institutions were reviewed by peer panels with national and international expertise).<sup>9</sup> The revised European Standards and Guidelines developed by the E4 Group in 2014, sets out the following European level standard: *'Institutions should assure themselves of the competence of their teachers. They should apply fair and transparent processes for the recruitment and development of the staff'*. Higher education institutions are preparing to take these revised standards on board. The framework can build upon the structures in place for the internal quality assurance systems in particular the feedback mechanisms in place to listen to the student voice.

We are clear that we want this framework to assure competence and aim for excellence in Irish higher education teaching. With that in mind we situate the creation of a professional development framework within the discourse of quality enhancement as well as quality assurance. Assurance largely focuses on having effective support systems in place that will inform institutions of the effectiveness of their standards, feedback mechanisms, periodic processes for evaluation and looking at continuous improvement. Enhancement and excellence could be said to draw upon commitment, promote the piloting of innovative and experimental developments with a view to embedding them as permanent features in the teaching and learning environment. Ideally, systems should of course be characterised by both assurance and enhancement. The development of an Irish professional development framework is a unique opportunity to create a system that recognises commitment to excellence and is built upon trust rather than box-ticking requirements. Figure 3 depicts how a framework could strive to operate in both discourses of assurance and enhancement.

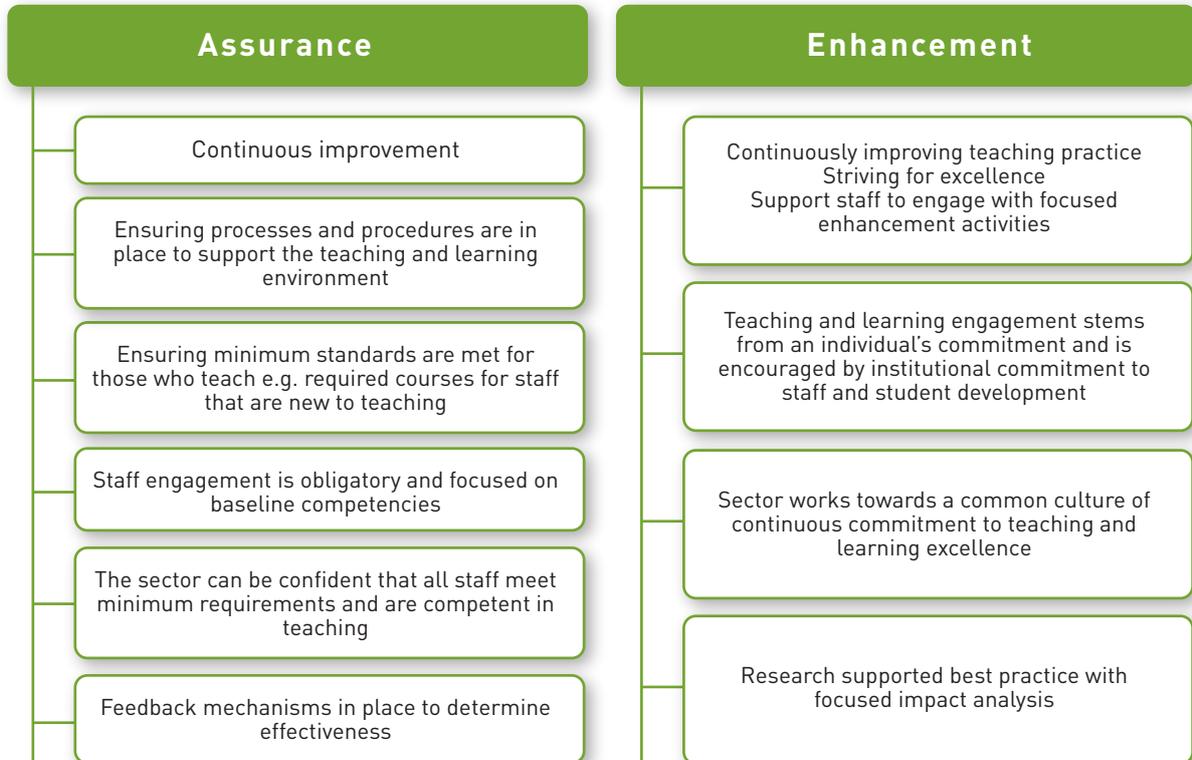
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6 The Bologna Follow-up Group monitors the outcomes of all recommendations of the Bologna process and overall progress and the impact upon same. Mapping and progress reports have been published on the various recommendations and impact of implementation or compliance over the years. Other Bologna tools include the learning outcomes approach (promoting this approach across Europe), the European Credit Transfer System (impacting on higher education institutes' (HEIs) programme design and development and student transfer), and highlighting the concept of student centred learning.

7 European Standards and Guidelines <http://www.enqa.eu/index.php/home/esg/> are a direct result of recommendations on quality assurance from the Bologna process and were originally adopted by the Ministers responsible for higher education in 2005. They are officially known as the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area and are developed by what is referred to as the E4 Group (European Network for Quality Assurance, European Students Union, European University Association and European Association of Institutions of Higher Education). The Bologna Follow-up Group has already endorsed the newly revised ESG and they await European Ministerial endorsement in 2015

8 Irish Universities Quality Board, Higher Education and Training Awards Council and National Qualifications Authority of Ireland now all under the new agency Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI)

9 All of these reports were published and are still available for the 41 institutions on the QQI website (for universities, institutes of technology and private higher education institutions).



**Figure 3. Approaches to quality in teaching**

### 1.3.2 Listening to those who teach

It is clear that policy at the global, European, and Irish level are aligned in support of:

- (i) ensuring competence and quality in teaching,
- (ii) providing relevant and consistent professional development opportunities for those who teach in higher education.

Practitioners have also voiced a strong need for a national system/framework through Forum consultations:

- From the document 'Principles and First Insights from the Sectoral Consultation on Building Digital Capacity in Irish Higher Education' (2014) the need for institutions to develop the digital literacy skills of staff to allow them to leverage digital technology to enhance teaching and learning in higher education emerged as a sector-identified priority. Incorporating digital literacy development with professional development framework rather than as a separate entity will help to reinforce and develop this area of learning.
- In November 2013, the Forum engaged the sector in regional Sectoral Dialogues to solicit feedback in relation to the professional development framework among other initiatives. The response across all regions was clear: educators are looking for something to guide their professional development; they are aware that there are existing frameworks in other countries and welcome an Irish initiative in this area. A summary of the regional dialogues follows.

**Table 3. Summary of sectoral dialogue on professional development**

<b>Themes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The importance of recognising diverse professional development needs, depending on stage of development, context and discipline.</li> <li>• The importance of ensuring that a framework of professional development is meaningful, motivating, engaging and impactful.</li> </ul>	
<b>Potential activities that institutions could share</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bring together groups to review existing accredited and non-accredited CPD in higher education</li> <li>• Accredited modules and programmes for teachers at different levels (beginner, experienced) and with different roles (academic, post grads, part-time staff, admin, tech support, etc.)</li> <li>• A variety of CPD inputs including non-accredited workshops, networks, seminars, workshops, conferences, etc.</li> <li>• Methods of evaluating teachers, e.g. student evaluation, peer evaluation</li> </ul>
<b>What is needed to support this initiative in institutions?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An institutional commitment to parity of esteem between teaching and research that is operationalised through incentives such as links to promotion and allocated time for CPD</li> <li>• Support from senior management to enhance the quality of teaching</li> <li>• Specialised teaching and learning resources, centres and supports</li> <li>• Specialised support for conducting, analysing and using and educational research in higher education</li> </ul>
<b>What is needed to implement this effectively at national level/in the future?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A national professional development framework that recognises the diversity of roles and contexts of work for teachers in higher education</li> <li>• A policy context that recognises the demands that CPD places on teachers in higher education</li> <li>• An open access one stop shop of available, transferable CPD options and teaching and learning experts inclusive of lecturers and educational development staff</li> </ul>

### 1.3.3 Listening to student voices

In a recent report from the Swedish National Union of Students (2014), students advocated for the government to encourage institutions to take the following steps in relation to professional development for their lecturers:

- Define pedagogical competence.
- Set aside time for professional development for lecturers.
- Mandatory 10 week pedagogical training module.
- Develop awards for excellence in teaching.
- Create a national action programme for higher education research in teaching.

The Swedish report is a clear example of why a professional development framework should have at its core the objective of enhancing the student learning experience. We know that our students have informed opinions on what makes good and excellent teaching through Union of Students in Ireland and participation in initiatives such as the Irish Survey of Student Engagement and the National Forum's Teaching Heroes campaign.

While we have yet to engage our students in the national consultation, we know from focus group research<sup>10</sup> conducted with students in 2014 that Irish students have strong insights and recommendations on how lecturers could engage with technology in their teaching and how institutions could support this. For example, participants felt that:

- Future buildings should be built in the knowledge that technology and its infrastructure is changing – lecture halls do not always make the best learning environment.
- Institutions could set standards for digital pedagogy/eLearning so that lecturers have some guidelines on the use of technology.
- Technology should allow for collaboration on projects between institutions and programmes.
- Mandatory digital pedagogy training should be provided to lecturers.
- Lecturers could have more support/training in how to develop eAssessments beyond exams or multiple choice questions.

The national professional development framework is a unique opportunity to align student needs with staff's professional development activities. A diversity of students should be involved in the consultation process to ensure that the multiple perspectives of students are heard. Keeping the student voice central will help ensure that the framework does not lose sight of the key objective of transforming teaching practice to enhance student learning.

## 1.4 Practice context: a history of engagement in CPD

Both the Hunt Report (DES, 2011) and the 2013 EC Report on *Improving the Quality of Teaching and Learning in Europe's Higher Education Institutions* recommend that those who teach in the sector should have a teaching qualification. Before we set our path for future directions based on global, European, and Irish policy, we have to take stock of where we currently stand in sectoral practice and engagement with professional development in teaching. As mentioned earlier, through national initiatives such as NAIRTL, AISHE,<sup>11</sup> EDIN and LIN, there has been a strong and consistent commitment to increasing the profile of teaching and professional development within the sector. As well, some institutions have done immense work in prioritising the professional development of their staff who teach, largely supported and motivated by internal quality assurance practices as mentioned in the previous section. To take stock of current practice in CPD we will look at the Irish context for accredited professional development, non-accredited/informal professional development and, disciplinary engagement with professional development.

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<sup>10</sup> To inform the Digital Roadmap, USI conducted a series of focus groups with students around their experience of technology in their learning experience.

<sup>11</sup> All Ireland Society for Higher Education

### 1.4.1 Accredited professional development

While the Forum was aware that a number of institutions offer both accredited and non-accredited teaching and learning professional development opportunities to staff, there was no comprehensive national list of offerings available to date. In light of the recommendations in the documents referred to above it was decided to gather details of the accredited offerings in universities, institutes of technology, and private colleges (see Figure 4). As mentioned in the introduction, the full report on accredited professional development in Ireland will be published separately.

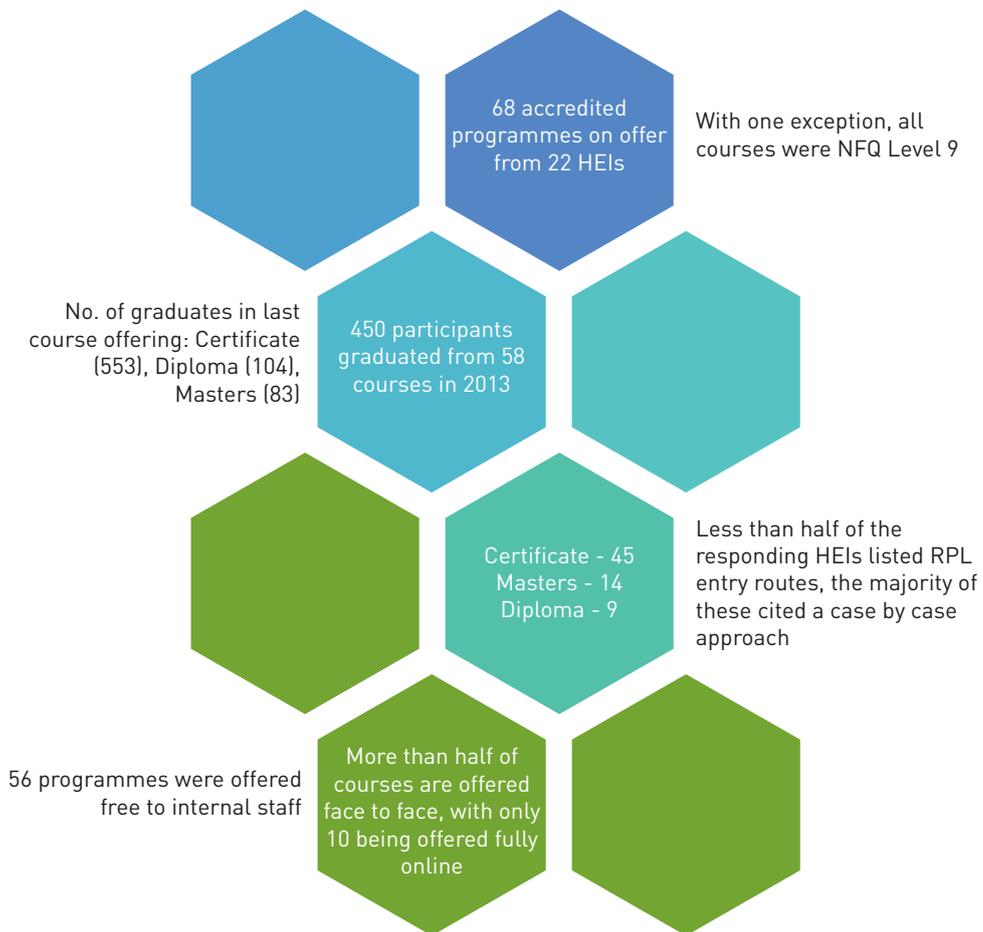
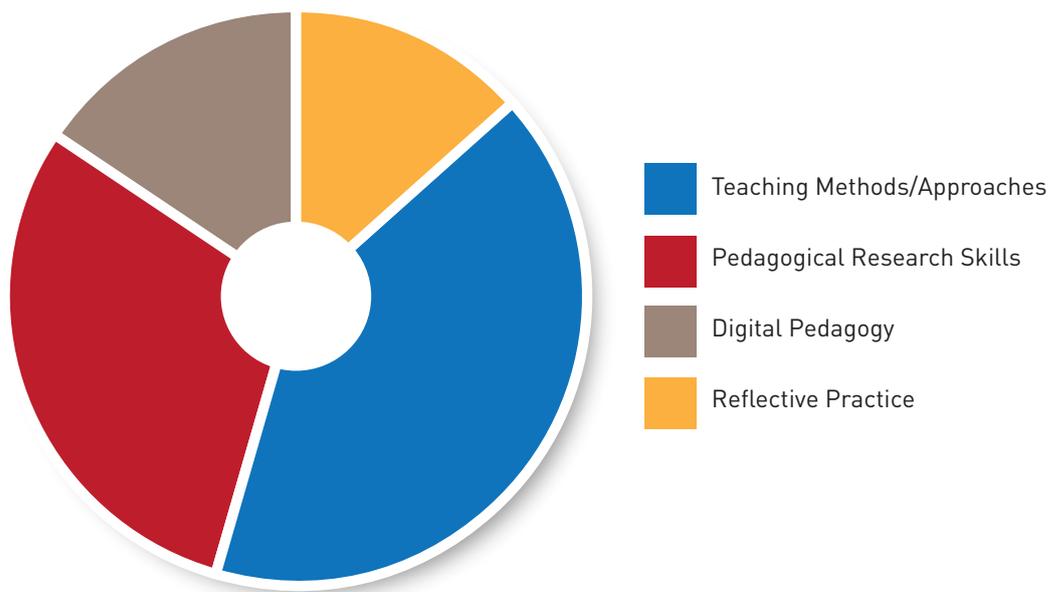


Figure 4. Summary of the national offerings in accredited professional development (APD)

The accredited modules were analysed by learning outcomes to ascertain if there were particular domains that were strongly supported by accredited professional development. Four main domains were identified; Teaching Methods and Approaches; Pedagogical Research Skills; Digital Pedagogy, and Reflective Practice. Figure 5 outlines the relative weighting of each domain across all the programmes reviewed.



**Figure 5. Focus of modules**

From this brief summary of accredited professional development modules and programmes in Ireland we can raise the following issues which may inform the emerging framework.

- There is robust activity in the area of accredited professional development throughout Ireland; however smaller institutions might not have the capacity/ongoing demand to sustain programmes year to year.
- While programmes are increasingly being offered on a blended basis, there may be scope for fully online modules to offer participants flexibility from a geographic and time perspective.
- There may be scope for modules at levels besides NFQ Level 9 to cater to a diverse participant cohort with varying needs coming to these modules.
- Most programmes have a general teaching, learning, and assessment focus. There may be scope for more modules/programmes catering to those who wish to pursue professional development in specialist areas such as digital pedagogy, leadership, administration.
- Recognition of prior learning (RPL) entry mechanism (including entry routes) and recognition of learning do not appear to be explicitly designed into most of these programmes as they cite a case by case approach. There is scope for institutional or sectoral approaches to RPL recognition for accredited professional development activities.

- Clear RPL mechanisms must be designed into the framework.
- There is wide variation in credits and duration of programmes/modules offering the same award. This raises the question of national coherence in CPD accredited programmes.

### 1.4.2 Non-accredited and informal professional development<sup>12</sup>

Substantial non-accredited work is being undertaken nationwide in relation to professional development in teaching. Non-accredited opportunities might take the form of one-off workshops, seminars, participation in conferences, reading and discussion groups, to name a few formats. Some consider conversations academics have with their peers about teaching to be a form of non-accredited professional development.

These activities are not as easy to map as accredited professional development. Given the diversity of forms of non-accredited offerings coupled with the reality that most do not have the time or resources to engage with accredited forms and probably are more involved with non-accredited forms, this will be a significant area of professional development activity that should inform the national framework. While we are not able to map these activities in the same way we are able to with accredited activities, we can offer a typology to help distinguish between types of non-accredited professional development activities (see Figure 6). This will be helpful when discussing in the national consultations how the framework might recognise the range of activities within the non-accredited domain.

**Figure 6. Typology of non-accredited professional development activities**

Structured non-accredited	Unstructured non-accredited	Collaborative non-accredited
<b>DEFINITION</b>		
These are externally organised activities (by an institution, network, disciplinary membership body). They are typically facilitated and have identified learning objectives.	These activities are independently led by the individual. Engagement is driven by the individual's needs/interests. Individuals source the materials themselves.	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.
<b>EXAMPLE IN PRACTICE</b>		
Workshops, seminars, MOOCs, Dublin eLearning summer school	Reading articles, following social media, watching video tutorials, keeping a reflective teaching journal/portfolio, preparing an article for publication	Conversations with colleagues, sharing research at a conference, peer review of teaching

<sup>12</sup> This section was informed in part by the Forum's 20 Questions on TEL (technology enhanced learning) survey and a Forum research project on the professional development needs of educational developers and learning technologists.

From this brief discussion on non-accredited professional development in Ireland we can raise the following issues which may inform the emerging framework:

- Participation in non-accredited CPD is not always recognised or evidenced currently.
- The range and flexible nature of some non-accredited CPD provides a variety of learning outcomes from acquiring technical skills and competence for example in relation to specialist software to, engaging in reflective or developmental activities.
- Non-accredited CPD does not currently have a recognition or measurement process to represent the learning achieved.
- Some CPD activities can be collaborative in nature, which presents challenges in terms of recognising individual learning.
- If informal CPD is to be given some credit-status it will require innovative approaches to its assessment and recognition.

### 1.4.3 Disciplinary engagement with professional development

We know that not all academics engage with generic teaching and learning professional development whether it is accredited or non-accredited; many academics prefer to engage through their discipline in matters of teaching and learning. Higher education teachers can access resources and support relating to disciplinary based teaching and learning practices, also known as pedagogical content knowledge, through linking with the colleagues in their department or faculty or through engaging in broader national and international disciplinary group and professional associations. For this reason we sought out information from disciplinary networks and organisations in relation to their engagement with teaching and learning issues.

Following a mapping exercise, close to 140 different disciplinary groups, subject-specific associations and communities of practice were identified in Ireland. These included a mix of professional associations, research networks and organisations with a teaching orientation. The groups studied<sup>13</sup> represented a range of different disciplines including Agricultural Economics, Chemistry, Early Childhood Studies, Engineering, Mathematics, Philosophy, Physics and Psychology.

The groups differed greatly in terms of their focus on teaching and learning. All organisations were based in Ireland but some were supported through their international links in terms of accessing teaching and learning resources or professional development. Some had very formal structures in place and run annual conferences, accredit courses, organise professional development activities, conduct research on teaching and learning in the discipline, train tutors, publish articles and reports, and create and disseminate open educational resources via their website. Other groups were only just beginning to think about teaching and learning in their discipline and have more of a focus on research and networking. The groups identified particular pedagogical approaches central to their discipline, such as experiential learning, blended learning, inquiry-based science education, community-based research, project-based learning. They also acknowledged more generic skills development that they were focussed on developing among their students such as critical reasoning, learning how to learn and independent thinking.

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<sup>13</sup> Of the 140 disciplinary groups, 29 responded and either agreed to participate in an interview or fill out a questionnaire related to disciplinary engagement with professional development.

When asked to identify what good teaching looks like, the groups specified more generic teaching practices such as providing timely feedback, active learning approaches and strategies that ensure student-centred learning. The majority placed a strong emphasis on enhancing students' independent learning skills. The groups recognised that there is a wealth of expertise already in the sector but a mechanism is needed to share this more broadly. Teaching and learning was not the main focus of the majority of the organisations and their members tended to access teaching and learning-related resources and professional development from within their home institutions rather than through their disciplinary group.

From this brief discussion on disciplinary engagement with teaching and learning in Ireland we can raise the following issues which may inform the emerging framework:

- Disciplinary groups should be stakeholders in the national consultation as they are core to the identity of many teachers and key sources for open educational resources.
- Staff are resourceful in seeking out resources on teaching and learning and will search beyond institutional and national boundaries for relevant, high quality material.
- Disciplinary groups focus on a wide range of issues and teaching and learning is not always central to their mission.
- Teaching and learning approaches cited by disciplinary groups as central to their pedagogy are not exclusive to any discipline – in other words, people may prefer to talk with disciplinary colleagues about teaching, even though colleagues in other disciplines have similar issues.

## Section 2:

### Learning from existing approaches to professional development

Now that we have defined professional development for our context and set the policy and practice context, we will look at existing approaches to professional development. The issue of how to enhance teaching in higher education sector-wide is a concern that has been expressed by institutions and education sectors all over the world. Similarly disciplinary professional bodies also face the challenge of how to implement consistent CPD practice within their membership bodies. With this in mind the Forum sought input from international colleagues on national approaches to professional development in teaching and learning (inclusive of approaches to digital frameworks) and undertook a comprehensive literature review of CPD practice within professional and disciplinary bodies.

Countries and professional bodies which are currently developing their own frameworks can provide useful insight into their national drivers, challenges, and consultation process. The decision to consult with international colleagues<sup>14</sup> was taken with the understanding that findings would inform our actions, rather than dictate our next steps. A beneficial consequence of this research exercise was to facilitate our enhanced membership of a global community of practice<sup>15</sup> focusing on national approaches to professional development in higher education teaching. The very process of engaging with international expertise in this domain has had the further benefit of raising awareness of Ireland's commitment to recognising, supporting, and benchmarking excellence in higher education teaching and this has been a positive development.

How can these international approaches inform the Irish sector? In analysing the interview responses<sup>16</sup> a typology emerged of approaches to continuing professional development, this is presented in Figure 7. Within this typology six factors can combine to create various approaches. For example a framework might be a once-off requirement of employment, led by the employing institution that results in a qualification for the individual. Contrastingly a framework might be entirely voluntary, led by a central national agency with requirements to remain in good standing. However whatever combination of factors emerge, it seems evident that the goal of *transformation of practice* across the sector is a shared mission. In developing a national framework for the Irish context, stakeholders should consider which characteristics will result in a system that meets the various objectives such as sustainability, inclusiveness, flexibility.

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14 A more complete overview of the methodology including interview questions and participant list will be published separately and made available through the Forum website.

15 It is worth noting that ICED (the International Consortium of Educational Developers) has recently published its results of a global survey entitled *The Preparation of University Teachers Internationally*. The 2013 survey had 13 country responses and its contents should further help to inform the Forum in relation to the development of the framework. Given the Forum's access to a draft of ICED's findings through the generosity of ICED's executive committee, it was decided to target some countries that were not explored in the draft.

16 Findings are indicative of the information provided in the interviews and thus are representative of the individual's perception of their national context. Varying interpretations of the national context in these countries is possible.



**Figure 7. Typology of approaches to CPD**

The above typology could be a useful frame of reference during the national consultation as it touches upon key characteristics of a professional development framework. It asks us to consider:

- How can these international structures inform the Irish sector?
- What should go into a framework?
- Who should take responsibility for the resourcing and monitoring of the framework?
- What do we want the framework to achieve?
- What values in the Irish higher education sector should inform the framework?

The following tables summarise national approaches of a sample of countries included in this overview.

## 2.1 Sample of national approaches<sup>17</sup>

Table 4. Australia

Australia	
<b>Key actors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Office for Learning and Teaching through commissioned research projects.</li> <li>• Two main collaborative initiatives currently led by University of Western Australia (UWA) and University of Melbourne (UM).</li> </ul>
<b>Summary of approach(es)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AUTCAS<sup>18</sup> (UWA) developed indicative criteria for promotion based on teaching.</li> <li>• Academic Workforce 2020 (UM) organised expert working group and national roundtable discussions with vice-chancellors and senior admin to respond to the question: 'How can we as a sector more deeply professionalise teaching?'</li> </ul>
<b>Underlying values</b>	National framework approach not wanted by consulted stakeholders, instead favoured institutional enhancement processes.
<b>Arising issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disciplines are crucial.</li> <li>• 'Grass roots' matter – conditions for individual professionalism outside institutional policy settings should be fostered and facilitated.</li> <li>• Institutions matter, and they are diverse; any new models will not be successful unless they are reflected in institutional policies and cultures.</li> <li>• Academic work is changing; need to recognise 'Para professionals' – those that are not teaching and research academics but teach in higher education.</li> <li>• Nurturing the next generation of comprehensively skilled teaching and researching academics is crucial, possibly through a newly styled Ph.D., formal and systematic early career mentoring.</li> <li>• Perhaps an Australian code of practice for teaching in HE?</li> <li>• Need for consensus around evaluation metrics.</li> <li>• Making the quality of teaching a higher imperative in institutional and national contexts is essential.</li> </ul>

<sup>17</sup> Participants from the Netherlands and the USA also participated in this research process; these country approaches are available in the full report.

<sup>18</sup> Australian University Teaching Criteria and Standards Framework (<http://uniteachingcriteria.edu.au>).

**Table 5. Spain**

<b>Spain</b>	
<b>Key actors</b>	DOCENTIA, the national framework for professional development in teaching is managed through ANECA (national quality body).
<b>Summary of approach(es)</b>	<p>DOCENTIA proposed/monitored by ANECA with voluntary institutional implementation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluates teaching performance at faculty (department) level.</li> <li>• The DOCENTIA framework is the same across disciplines.</li> <li>• Staff must go through it once every 5 years.</li> <li>• Four weighted dimensions: 1) self-evaluation (reflection); 2) account of activities across teaching (i.e. conferences, papers about teaching); 3) report from deans on faculty performance; 4) report from students 1–5 scale.</li> <li>• Four dimensions combine for a final figure for each faculty: poor, good, excellent.</li> <li>• In some institutions results relate to promotion criteria.</li> </ul>
<b>Underlying values</b>	<p>Standard engagement rather than an explicit focus on transformation of practice.</p> <p>Focus on quality at programme/departmental level, not only at the individual level.</p>
<b>Arising issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The majority of faculties were rated ‘excellent’. This high rating across the board may be attributed to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dean’s report may not be discriminating, as they might not have the expertise in teaching and learning.</li> <li>- Types of items used in evaluation (four weighted dimensions) might not be appropriate indicators of good teaching practice.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Given the high ratings across the country, this has affected the credibility of DOCENTIA within the academic community.</li> <li>• Different stakeholder groups such as unions brought different priorities to the development of DOCENTIA.</li> </ul>

**Table 6. Netherlands**

<b>The Netherlands</b>	
<b>Key actors</b>	Quality Assurance Netherlands Universities (QANU), Universities of Applied Sciences, and Universities.
<b>Summary of approach(es)</b>	<p>In 2012 there was a performance agreement with the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science around the quality of teaching looking at the proportion of people qualified to teach.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Universities of Applied Sciences and Universities responded with institutional initiatives, largely based in teaching and learning centres.</li> <li>• Institutions are required to report to QANU on how many teachers are going through pedagogical training and who identifies who needs this training.</li> </ul>
<b>Underlying values</b>	<p>Institutions are best placed to ascertain, provide, and assess their staff's pedagogical training.</p> <p>Pedagogical training is most needed for those new to teaching, evidenced by the fact that those who have been teaching for a set amount of time do not need CPD.</p>
<b>Institutional example in practice: University of Twente</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The 5 ECTS course consists of the following: designing a module, how do you achieve learning outcomes, presenting styles, micro-teaching, portfolio, constructive alignment.</li> <li>• The programme instils an understanding of 'TOM' – Twente's educational model based on project-led education.</li> <li>• It is required for those who are newly appointed; those in longer terms of service are exempt.</li> <li>• It is the same course across disciplines.</li> <li>• RPL routes are available.</li> <li>• Linked to promotion and completion requirement within 1–2 years to move on/continue in your contract.</li> </ul>
<b>Arising issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There can be great variation between institutions as to what constitutes pedagogical training.</li> <li>• The central role of the institution allows teaching and learning centres to advocate a type of institutional pedagogy.</li> <li>• There is little flexibility for those who wish to move between institutions or who have part-time appointments in different institutions because different institutions are not required to recognise work done in other institutions.</li> <li>• The once-off format of professional development does not ensure 'remaining in good standing' or continuous reflective development.</li> <li>• As a result of long-standing service, many would be exempt from the courses and would not benefit.</li> </ul>

**Table 7. United Kingdom**

<b>United Kingdom</b>	
<b>Key actors</b>	Higher Education Academy (HEA) manages the UK Professional Standards Framework (PSF), but it is owned by the sector through sectoral participation in review of applications and through institutional support.
<b>Summary of approach(es)</b>	<p>UK PSF is managed by HEA with voluntary institutional implementation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluates teaching performance at the individual level.</li> <li>• UK PSF is the same across disciplines.</li> <li>• Three dimensions: Areas of Activity, Core Knowledge, and Professional Values.</li> <li>• Four HEA recognitions (Associate Fellow, Fellow, Senior Fellow, Principal Fellow) that correspond to a relevant combination of descriptors for the three dimensions. For example, an Associate Fellow must display evidence of certain abilities within the three dimensions.</li> <li>• In some institutions achievement against UK PSF and Fellowship scheme can relate to promotion or hiring criteria.</li> <li>• In most cases institutional teaching and learning centres help candidates prepare their applications, which are then reviewed by peers across the sector in a process overseen by the HEA UK.</li> <li>• Programmes can apply for recognition to the HEA UK, so that participants who have successfully completed will achieve the associated HEA recognition.</li> </ul>
<b>Underlying values</b>	<p>Recognition of diversity amongst those who teach (e.g., post docs, new lecturers, educational development staff, senior admin).</p> <p>Colleagues are competent and credible assessors of each other’s teaching practice.</p> <p>Emphasis on reflective practice.</p>
<b>Arising issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Methods for keeping in good standing with the Fellowship scheme were not addressed from the outset.</li> <li>• Administrative load is heavy during review times given the peer review process.</li> <li>• The linear structure of the fellowship scheme does not offer explicit pathways for those who have achieved Principal Fellowship.</li> <li>• The UK PSF and Fellowship scheme have gained international credibility as institutions and some countries worldwide are adopting the framework.</li> <li>• Through the results of external evaluation processes, changes to the framework for clarity have been adopted.</li> </ul>

From an analysis of responses we see that not all countries are working towards a system such as a professional development framework, rather they are creating national responses that are relevant to their context and higher education infrastructure. The cases of Australia and the Netherlands are interesting in that they seem to be in a critical time of developing more institutionalised approaches to professional development in higher education teaching. The UK PSF, while a UK initiative, has been adopted and adapted to institutions outside the UK, such as in Canada, Sri Lanka, and Australia.

From this brief discussion on national approaches to professional development in teaching we can raise the following issues which may inform the emerging framework:

- Whether the approach taken is nationally or institutionally coordinated, it is clear that collaboration from key stakeholder groups is necessary.
- Consultation processes ensure buy-in from senior management from the outset. Buy in from all levels of stakeholder organisations is vital.
- From all examples we can see there is an important balance to be struck in the relationship between national bodies and institutions when supporting professional development, identifying professional development needs and goals.
- Given their quality assurance mandate the process for establishing the framework should maintain strong links and communication with Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI).
- RPL processes must be considered from the outset.
- Flexibility and freedom to move between institutions must be considered from the outset.
- Public regard and credibility of the framework can be strong motivators for engagement, as seen with the HEA Fellowships that correspond to the UK PSF.
- Once-off approaches such as mandatory induction programmes are effective as part of a larger strategy for CPD over the course of an individual's career.
- Planned monitoring and evaluation are key in ensuring the sustainability, relevance and clarity of national frameworks as evidenced by the UK experience.
- There should be a mechanism to ensure that those who assess others' CPD activities are well placed to do so.
- Linear or staged models offer a range of entry points into a framework, however by their nature once you have reached the apex there is no further pathway, as evidenced in the Fellowship format of the HEA.
- None of the approaches explicitly mentioned a means for individuals to specialise in topics of interest to their particular teaching practice.

## 2.2 Sample of approaches by professional bodies

Table 8. Professional bodies

Professional Body	Summary of approach(es)	Underlying values	Arising issues
<b>Bord Altranais</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RPL routes</li> <li>• Registration of practitioners</li> <li>• CPD Directory in 14 areas</li> <li>• An Bord Altranais Continuing Education Units (ABA CEUs) are the unit of measurement and assessment.</li> </ul>	<p>The nursing profession is evolving to include a variety of professional practices including teaching and learning.</p>	<p>There can be disagreement between the central body and institutions over what is relevant for CPD.</p> <p>The credit approach can lead to a box-ticking type of behaviour in some individuals.</p>
<b>Engineers Ireland</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RPL routes, also open to students</li> <li>• Four categories of Registered Professional Titles</li> <li>• Competences based, credits</li> <li>• Requirements to remain in good standing</li> <li>• Specialists areas available such as Project Management</li> <li>• Approved one-off CPD events</li> <li>• CPD provided by accredited employers</li> </ul>	<p>The engineering profession is evolving to include a variety of professional practices.</p> <p>Continued engagement is essential to maintain one's professional development.</p>	<p>The high level of structure and detail provides clear pathways; however it also can hinder institutional flexibility in programme provision.</p> <p>The credit approach can lead to a box-ticking type of behaviour in some individuals.</p>
<b>Ontario College of Teachers, Canada</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open to certified teachers with the Ontario College of Teachers</li> <li>• Courses provided by institutions</li> <li>• Specialist areas available such as: disciplinary knowledge, teaching methods, academic leadership</li> <li>• Courses developed and reviewed on ongoing basis</li> <li>• Clusters of courses required to teach disciplines/for promotion to senior admin</li> </ul>	<p>Teachers are a diverse cohort with diverse interests; this is reflected in the flexible nature of the framework and the ability to specialise in certain areas.</p> <p>CPD needs to evolve on a constant basis, evidenced by the OCT's commitment to accrediting new courses on an ongoing basis.</p>	<p>Given that only accredited course (modules) are acceptable under this framework, it can be cost-prohibitive for some individuals.</p> <p>RPL routes are not always clear.</p>

From this brief discussion on professional bodies' approaches to professional development we can raise the following issues which may inform the emerging framework:

- Frameworks that only recognise accredited professional development can be seen as cost-prohibitive, especially for part-time lecturers.
- A specialist approach offers greater flexibility to individuals and allows them to pursue tailored career paths.
- Assigning 'credits' to non-accredited activities might be a way to incorporate these activities, however this may lead to box-ticking behaviour. Also, it might reward participation without reflection or application.
- Flexibility should be built into the framework so that there is scope for the development of new types of CPD activities as the need arises.

## 2.3 Disciplinary approaches

There are contrasting views on where the focus of attention should be for the development of teaching and learning of academic staff. Some advocate for a strong disciplinary focus, citing studies which show the impact of disciplinary cultures and disciplinary-based ways of knowing on student learning and teaching practice (Neumann, 2001). Others argue for the development of general teaching skills and pedagogy, both for pragmatic reasons and also to encourage staff to step outside their disciplinary contexts in order to gain new ideas and a more critical approach to teaching practice and pedagogy (Lindblom-Ylänne et al., 2006). While academics are usually hired for their subject or discipline-specific knowledge and identify themselves in relation to their discipline, professional development frameworks, continuing professional development activities and accredited programmes tend to focus on generic teaching and learning skills. The implicit assumption in this approach is that staff who engage in generic professional development activities will be able to link these with their practice (Jenkins and Burkill, 2004).

The literature on signature pedagogies suggests that there are distinct disciplinary approaches to student education which serve to prepare students for a particular profession, and reflect the core values of the discipline (Schulman, 2005). It can be argued that the epistemologies of different disciplines lend themselves to particular approaches to teaching and assessment. Differences also exist in relation to the learning environment, e.g. laboratories, studios, the workplace and so on, and the teaching approaches required in each. On the other hand, signature pedagogies and disciplinary epistemologies can be better explained as conventions within a discipline. Disciplines might be more homogenous than suggested, and there are benefits associated with looking beyond disciplinary boundaries which could be lost by taking too narrow a focus. For example, teaching practices that have emerged from particular disciplinary areas, for example problem-based learning in Medicine and the case method in Business, have been successfully adopted by other disciplines.

The following examples from national frameworks or lists of standards make explicit mention of disciplinary approaches, but only as a short entry on a more extensive list of generic approaches.

1. The UK's Higher Education Academy Professional Standards Framework requires the demonstration of knowledge of 'How students learn, both generally and within their subject/disciplinary area(s)' under the 'Core Knowledge' dimension of practice of the PSF.
2. The Australian Teaching Criteria and Standards Framework requires evidence showing disciplinary engagement in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning and of being a member of a disciplinary T&L network. One requirement for 'Professor' category requires evidence of disciplinary contributions to student materials or textbooks.

There are also existing examples of national and international professional development programmes focused on specific disciplines which may also be interesting to examine.

- The International Teachers' Programme (ITP) is an interesting example of a disciplinary-based professional development activity focused on supporting higher education business teachers across Europe to develop their teaching practice. Interestingly, while they address particular learning approaches that are specific to business education, for example teaching and learning with cases, the bulk of their programme is focused on more generic skills development such as gamification for active learning, problem-based learning, teaching large groups, etc., and general pedagogical considerations such as learning styles, engaging adult learners and how to combine research with teaching.
- The CIRTL network in the USA advances the teaching of STEM<sup>19</sup> subjects. The CIRTL network comprises 23 research universities and extends the work of the original Centre for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning which is based at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The focus of the network is to prepare the influence of future STEM teachers through engaging graduate students in teaching-as-research activities.

Also of possible interest is the new national initiative in second level teaching which in Ireland focuses on the up-skilling of out-of-field teachers of mathematics. This initiative emphasises the development of effective teaching practices that integrate subject-specific knowledge and pedagogical knowledge. However, as second level teachers are required to hold a teaching qualification in contrast to higher education where teachers do not, the potential relevance of the model is not clear.<sup>20</sup>

From this brief discussion on disciplinary engagement with teaching and learning in Ireland we can raise the following issue which may inform the emerging framework:

- The emerging framework should take into account how it will be relevant to disciplinary needs by being flexible in its understanding that teaching excellence may look different in different contexts.
- The framework should also recognise that there are generic and transferrable principles associated with good teaching that are common to all disciplines and can last with a singular discipline focus.

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19 Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

20 While it could be argued that this problem is distinct to second level teaching, there is an increasing incidence of out-of-field teaching in technical colleges and some universities due to financial rationalisation, decreasing staff numbers and widening of access to higher education. Such a programme for HE out-of-field teachers would require both pedagogical and content-knowledge development of teachers, as well as pedagogic content knowledge.

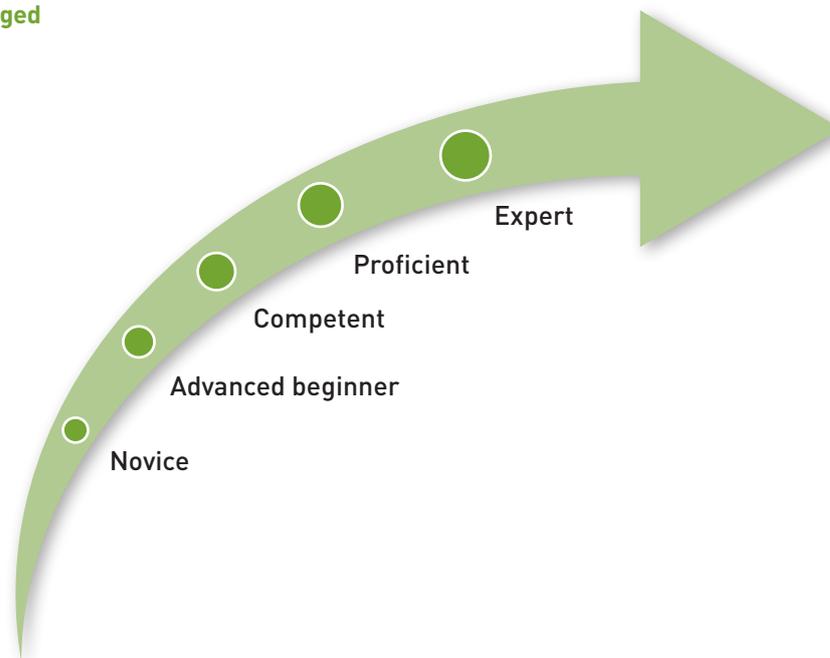
## Section 3: Towards a National Consultation

In this final section we present a range of models of a framework. The National Forum at this time is not putting forward a recommendation for adopting any particular model for the Irish context. The best model of professional development to meet the needs of those teaching in higher education in Ireland will be identified through the consultation process.

This section also outlines possible objectives for the framework and suggests some guiding questions to inform the National Consultation process. These questions are not meant to be prescriptive and we anticipate that the consultation process will extend beyond the questions mentioned here. First, we offer some general questions that might arise after reading this document, then we adopt a stakeholder perspective and suggest questions specific to interest groups.

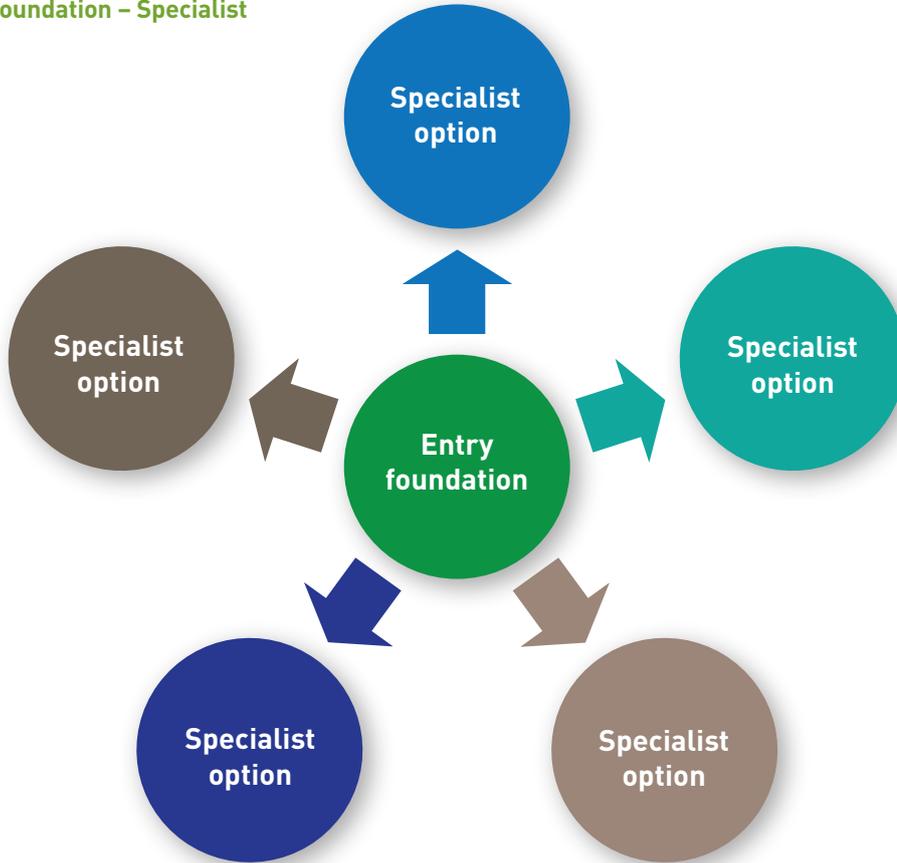
### 3.1 Possible models of a professional development framework

#### Model 1. Linear – Staged



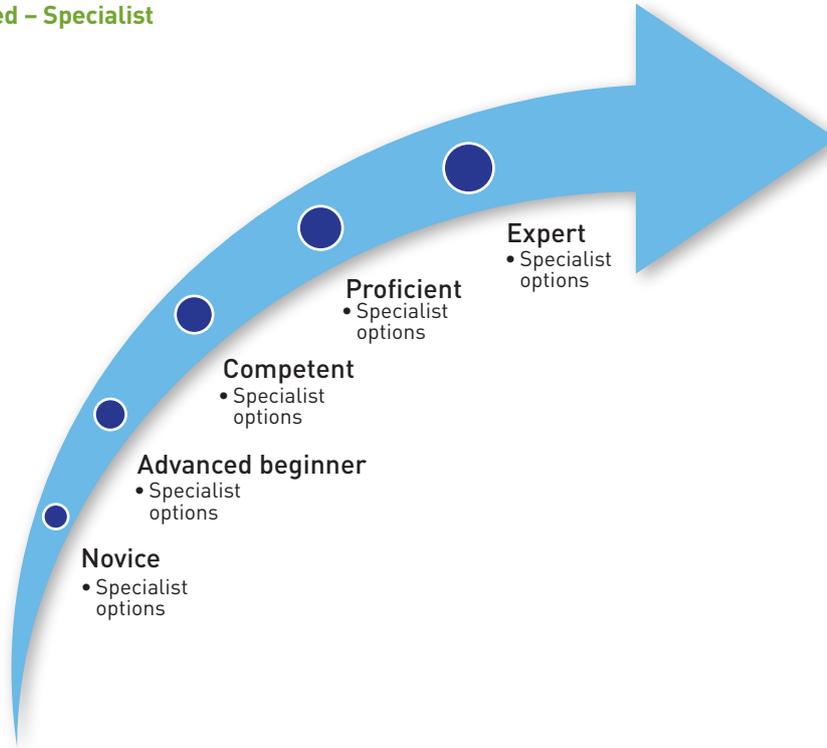
Opportunities	Challenges
Clear progression could make it easy to interpret for those engaged, those assessing, and those developing relevant CPD activities	One pathway for all; lack of flexibility could be a challenge for those with diverse interests or diverse career paths
'Expert' level brings level of prestige; could motivate engagement	Process to remain in good standing would need to be built in
Accredited and non-accredited activities could be incorporated	Linear format suggests that there is a set number of skills required at each stage
	Assumes that there are stages of 'excellence' in teaching
	Once 'expert' is achieved, where is the CPD pathway?

**Model 2. Foundation – Specialist**



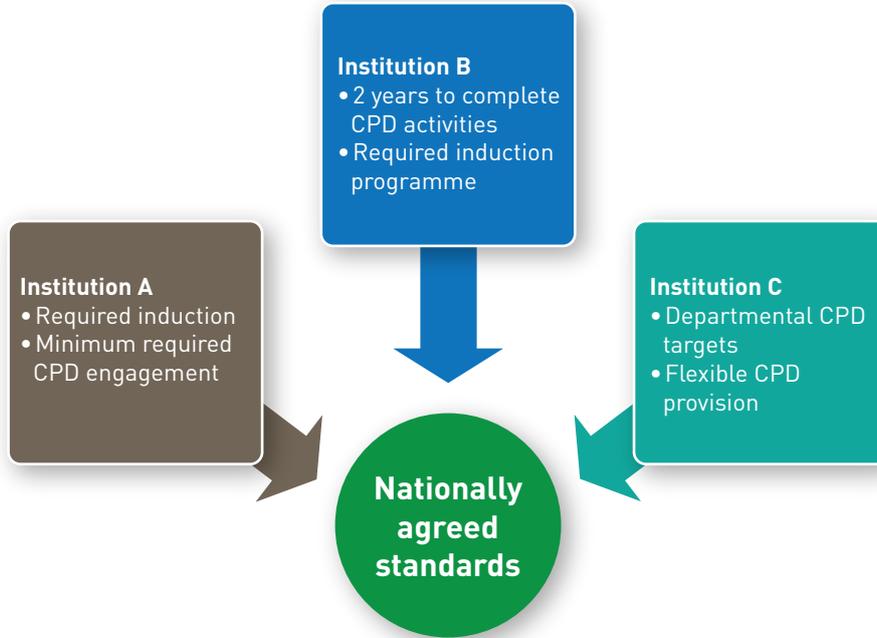
Opportunities	Challenges
A single 'entry foundation' point means that the sector could work towards guaranteeing a level of teaching expertise	Pathways are not clear, and could be confusing for those looking to engage, develop CPD, and assess CPD
Specialist options could appeal to those with diverse interests and career paths	Lack of hierarchy might be not be appealing for senior level staff
Specialist options could be created as the need arises	Administrative load associated with developing and assessing new specialist options could be heavy
Specialist options allow for individuals to follow/ showcase their individual interests	Senior staff might not see it as appropriate that they would have to demonstrate 'foundation' competence before pursuing specialist areas
Accredited and non-accredited could be incorporated	RPL routes must be developed

### Model 3. Staged – Specialist



Opportunities	Challenges
Combination of a linear and specialist model could appeal to those who seek flexibility and those who value a clear hierarchy	Remaining in good standing needs to be built in
After 'expert' level is achieved, one could pursue various additional supplementary options/awards	Deciding which levels need to be achieved before pursuing particular specialist outcomes
Specialist options could be developed as the need arises	RPL routes must be developed

**Model 4. Central requirement – Institutional implementation**



Opportunities	Challenges
Allows for institutional flexibility/freedom to decide how to meet national standards	Focus is on assurance, not enhancement
Minimises the need for central resources to monitor, evaluate the process	One set of standards for the diversity of teaching roles
	Focus is on institutional quality, rather than individual CPD
	Career pathways not evident, more akin to monitoring

## 3.2 Possible objectives for a national framework

The following objectives might serve to guide the creation of a professional development framework. These objectives and recommendations derive not just from the material presented in this document but also from initial views expressed during the Sectoral Dialogues and the Digital Roadmap consultations. The Irish professional development framework for higher education teaching should:

- Recognise teaching excellence and not just competence.
- Provide accreditation to individuals committed to teaching and learning through a transparent system of recognition and assessment.
- Enable and assist departments, schools, and institutions to develop a strategic approach to professional development and to build their reputation as internationally regarded leaders in teaching in higher education.
- Reflect the higher education sector's public commitment to teaching excellence in all areas of Irish higher education.
- Support and guide those teaching and their institutions to ensure that teaching and learning within their contexts are characterised by internationally recognised excellence and rigour and impact.

### Be inclusive

The Irish professional development framework for higher education teaching should be inclusive of diversity by:

- Recognising all roles that contribute to teaching, such as lecturers, librarians, administrators, educational developers, technicians, access officers, international officers, learning support providers and many more.
- Incorporating all stages of higher education careers and roles, from entry level roles to more senior roles encompassing leadership, management or those responsible for institutional policy roles.
- Being accessible to the full range of institutional types and mission orientations in the higher education landscape: vocationally focused, employability focused, teaching focused, research focused and specialist discipline focused.
- Accommodating disciplinary statutory and professional bodies.
- Recognising the diversity of teaching approaches and methods such as online, face to face, blended, peer-led, enquiry and problem-based learning.

### Be clear in its aims, objectives, and mechanisms

The Irish professional development framework for higher education teaching should be clear in terms of:

- Communicating its implications for students, those who teach, the discipline, and the institution.
- The transparency of its recognition and assessment process.
- The pathways available for individuals, disciplines, and institutions to create individualised professional development plans.

### **Be sustainable**

The Irish professional development framework for higher education teaching should take account of its sustainability by:

- Considering how it can be properly resourced and continue to support its participants over time.
- Ensuring that evaluation processes are built into the development of a framework.

### **Be flexible**

The Irish professional development framework for higher education teaching should demonstrate its flexibility by:

- Enhancing teaching and learning, and embracing good practice, new approaches, developing teaching and learning contexts.
- Recognising a diversity of disciplines, roles, higher education institutions, and countries.
- Recognising that many staff are already participating in disciplinary professional development frameworks such as nursing, engineers, and law.

### **Be research-informed**

The Irish professional development framework for higher education teaching should:

- Be developed in a way that reflects a deep understanding of the scholarly research in the domains of teaching and learning.
- Be informed by existing national surveys such as the Irish Survey of Student Engagement, Ireland's growing database of evidence that relates to student experience, learning impact and pedagogies.

### **Be connected to practice**

The Irish professional development framework for higher education teaching should:

- Enhance practice and have a demonstrable impact on the practitioner experience.

## 3.3 Possible guiding questions for the consultation

### **Q1 What kind of professional development framework is needed to meet the needs of those teaching in higher education in Ireland?**

- What does teaching excellence look like?
- What underlying values should inform the framework?
- How can a focus on digital aspects of teaching and learning be incorporated into a framework?
- How can a framework account for the evolving nature of learning in an increasing digital world?
- Who is the framework for?

### **Q2 How can the framework integrate and recognise existing accredited and non-accredited provision?**

- Should participation in non-accredited CPD be recognised under the framework?
- Should participation be accompanied by evidence of reflection or transformation of practice?
- Given the unstructured nature of some non-accredited CPD, how can the framework ensure the quality and learning outcomes of these activities?
- Could a credit system be considered to measure non-accredited CPD be rolled out across the sector?
- Given the collaborative nature of teaching, how will the framework recognise the contribution of individuals in a collaborative environment?

### **Q3 What approaches should be leveraged to recognise the professional work-based learning of those teaching in higher education?**

- How might standards be achieved/demonstrated and how are they maintained (initial vs 'good standing')?
- What opportunities might exist for clearer pathways, articulation between and across existing programmes, embedding and sustainability?
- Who will be responsible for assessing applications related to the framework?
- What RPL processes can be put into place to acknowledge previous activities?

### **Q4 What management structure would help to make the professional development framework sustainable and give it ongoing credibility nationally and internationally?**

- How can we reach students and ensure their voice is heard in this process?
- How will institutions and central bodies work together to promote and manage the framework?
- How will evaluation and monitoring be built into the framework?
- How could a professional development framework empower staff to flourish in the complex, challenging context of contemporary HE, i.e. given the time and resource constraints?

- How do we reach those who do not currently engage in professional development?
- How can we achieve buy-in from all levels (top-down and bottom-up)?
- How can we develop this framework in partnership with disciplinary professional bodies who have existing professional development frameworks?

**Q5 Based on the models of professional development presented, is there any particular model either whole or in part which you think might be relevant to an Irish professional development framework?**

## 3.4 Stakeholder perspectives

### Students

How can a framework prepare teachers for the existing diversity in the classroom (mature, international, access, students with disabilities, part-time students, online students)?

How can a framework have a positive effect on not only those teachers who are new to teaching but also those who have been teaching for many years?

### Lecturers

How will a framework be accessible to part-time teachers, Ph.D. students, those new to teaching, and those who have been teaching for many years?

How will my senior administrators support my participation in the framework?

How will my previous CPD activities be recognised?

I teach in a specific discipline, how will this be relevant to my teaching context?

### Senior administration

What can I do within my department/institution to demonstrate my commitment to teaching?

How can I ask staff to engage with more CPD given their time constraints?

I am in a discipline and institution that is research-intensive, how can I motivate staff buy-in for a teaching related initiative?

Where will I send my staff to get support/CPD?

### Support staff

I teach in contexts different from lecturers, how will the framework recognise this?

I have no background in teaching, though I find myself doing it now – how can I start my journey on this framework?

**Professional bodies**

We have a strong membership base of lecturers across Irish HEIs. How will our existing framework relate to the emerging framework?

**Policy bodies**

How will the emerging framework dovetail with current EU and international policy contexts in relation to quality assurance and teaching excellence in higher education?

How will the emerging framework dovetail with existing Irish frameworks in the secondary and further education sector?

## Next steps

**This consultation document will underpin a National Consultation process with the higher education sector in Ireland during 2015.**

**Full details of the consultation process is available at [www.teachingandlearning.ie](http://www.teachingandlearning.ie)**

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