

Operationalising academic performance: Implementing Teaching Performance Expectations



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Overview

- Rationale
- International and national context
- Origin of the Teaching Performance Expectations (TPEs)
- Design and implementation of the TPEs

Rationale

- Universities are under ↑ pressure to demonstrate accountability and transparency in academic performance

External Demands:

- Periods of economic turbulence and change
- International ranking
- Changing technologies
- Competitive market

Internal Demands:

- Changing dynamic of the academic
 - ↑ demands and roles of academics

Rationale

- Highlights the need for explicit academic performance expectations in **research, teaching** and **service**

Aim:

- Provide an overview of the development and implementation of the TPEs at the University of Tasmania
- Closely aligned to key strategic initiatives:
 - Internationally
 - Nationally
 - Institutionally

International Context

- Higher Education Academy (HEA) has led a number of strategic initiatives related to teaching excellence:
 - UK Professional Standards Framework
 - National Teaching Fellowship Scheme
 - Studies in reward and recognition of teaching (Cashmore and Ramsden, 2009; Cashmore, Cane and Cane, 2013)

Review of Teaching Excellence Initiatives:

- Undertaken by Gunn and Fisk, 2013
- Outlines a framework around teaching quality and excellence
- Four dimensions identified

Elements for Developing the Architecture of a Teaching Excellence Taxonomy

Dimension 1: *Achieving educational demands on universities* – extent to which excellent learning outcomes in response to the relevant educational demands are defined and illustrated by universities

Dimension 2: *Excellent structures* – level of quality of different domains promoting teaching excellence in universities

Dimension 3: *Demonstrating individual excellence* – degrees of success in demonstrating excellence in teaching practice

Dimension 4: *Quality of evidence* – levels of quality of evidencing individual teacher excellence

(Gunn and Fisk, 2013)

National Context

- Office for Learning and Teaching (OLT) has also instigated a number of strategic initiatives around teaching excellence and reward and recognition:
 - Quality teaching framework (Chalmers et al. 2013)
 - Blueprint for influencing Australian policy and practice in HE teaching
 - Memorandum of Understanding with HEA in 2014

Transforming Practice Programme (TCP):

- Reward and recognition
- 13 Australian and 9 UK universities
- Aims:
 - Knowledge translation
 - Sharing of expertise and insights

Origin of the TPEs

- University of Tasmania undertook significant organisational changes in academic performance in 2012-2014

Communication of objectives and clarification of responsibilities and classifications will assist staff to understand how their endeavours contribute to UTAS. Clear articulation of performance expectations, including definition of the “UTAS Academic”, will provide guidance for confirmation and promotion ...

University of Tasmania Strategic Plan *Open to Talent: 2012 Onwards*

- *Opening UTAS to Talent: The UTAS Academic* approved in 2012
 - Outlines minimum performance expectations in research and learning and teaching
- Strategic Plan for Learning and Teaching (2012-2014)

Strategic Plan for Learning and Teaching (2012-2014)

- Four key goals:
 - Facilitate excellence in learning;
 - Ensure excellence in teaching;
 - Develop a renewed curriculum;
 - Develop and maintain quality partnerships

International Benchmarking Project (2012):

- University of Wollongong (AUS)
- University of Newcastle and Leicester (UK)
- Funded by the HEA
- Comparing promotions policies and processes

Promoting Teaching Benchmarking Project

– Definition of ‘Benchmarking’:

‘ A learning process structured so as to enable those engaging in the process to compare services/activities/products to identify strength and weaknesses for self-improvement and/or self-regulation’

Purpose:

- Compare policies, processes and perceptions on promotion with an emphasis on the reward and recognition of teaching

Key Objectives:

- 1) Develop a benchmarking framework and resources
- 2) Collect data on current promotions policies and processes
- 3) Triangulate data on outcomes to identify areas of good practice and areas for improvement

Promotions Benchmarking Framework

Performance Indicators	Performance Measures
1. Plans and Policies	a) University plans b) Promotions policies
2. Perceptions and Practices	a) University leaders b) Leaders of academic units c) Peers
3. Promotion Applicants	a) Career planning and advice b) Academic mentors and supervisors
4. Promotion Applications	a) Forms and guidelines b) Evidence c) Systems
5. Promotion Committee	a) Membership b) Preparation c) Procedures d) External input e) Transparency
6. Outcomes and Review	a) Equitable outcomes b) Review cycle c) Positive perception

Self-Review Phase

- Steering group provided advice
- Academic staff perceptions of promotion process also considered important:
 - Two online surveys:
 - 1) Staff Experience of Strategic Initiatives to Enhance the Quality and Esteem of Learning and Teaching (SESIEQELT) (n=220)
 - 2) Staff Perceptions of Promotions (n=92)

Key Findings from SESIEQELT Survey:

- Staff have actively participated in, or are aware of, most of the institutional professional development initiatives in L&T
- 31% participated in the grants scheme
- 36% participated in the reward and recognition scheme
- Professional development initiatives considered most effective in raising the esteem of L&T
- Additional funding for teaching has been most important
- Change of culture to recognise teaching *should be* most important

Self-Review Phase

Key Findings from Staff Perceptions of Promotions Survey:

- Measurement of excellence in teaching is challenging due to a lack of clear performance metrics
- Need for support for Heads of School to deal with poor teaching in performance management
- Research activities are considered more important for promotion (93%) compared to teaching activities (74%)
- 71% noted tensions dividing teaching and research activities

‘There is a common assumption (among staff at least) that teaching is secondary to research.’

- Unclear as to where the scholarship/research of teaching sits within the promotion application
- Student evaluation considered most important for assessing and rewarding teaching
- Peer-review of teaching a more viable strategy

Peer-Review Phase

- Peer-review workshop held in November, 2012
- Identified key areas of good practice and areas of improvement

Areas of Good Practice:

- University of Wollongong's Mix of Evidence Guide

Areas of Improvement:

- Importance of embedding parity of esteem at Heads/Deans level
- Understanding how teaching is evidenced
- Provision of institutional support to assist applicants to collect data on an informal/formal basis

Consultation Process

- Key stakeholder groups in 2013:
 - Institution-wide workshops
 - 7 Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Students and Education) Roadshows
 - Email correspondence
 - Call-out for formal written submissions (n=19 received)

Major Themes:

- Positive response for opportunity to provide feedback
- Opportunity to focus performance in L&T welcomed
- Existing support recognised and more support required
- Balancing the TPEs with the Research Performance Expectations (RPEs)
- Articulation of Teaching Scholar position
- Managing underperformance
- Need to differentiate between teaching- and research-intensive staff
- Difficulty in individually influencing retention rates
- Pass rates not directly aligned to the quality of teaching

University of Tasmania TPEs

- Approved by Tasmania Social Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee
- Informed by:
 - Work of Gunn and Fisk (2013)
 - International benchmarking project
 - Consultation process

TPEs are Composed of Three Domains:

- 1) Excellence in student learning and teaching practice
 - 2) Excellence in contemporary curriculum design and engagement
 - 3) Excellence in scholarly teaching (previously scholarship of teaching)
- Important to balance the TPEs with the RPEs
 - Successful implementation of teaching expectations depends on its capacity to demonstrate alignment with/integration of research excellence taxonomies and teaching quality processes (Gunn and Fisk, 2013)

University of Tasmania TPEs

- Need structures and processes to support teaching excellence and reward and recognition (Gunn and Fisk, 2013)

Nine Organisational Structures:

- 1) Performance and Career Development process
- 2) TELT White Paper
- 3) Professional Learning Circles
- 4) Strategic Priority Grants recognised as research
- 5) Teaching focused academics
- 6) Institutional process for the peer-review of teaching
- 7) Process and procedure and online moderation tool for external peer-review of teaching
- 8) Course and unit review database
- 9) Seven policies in course quality and learning and teaching evaluation

University of Tasmania TPEs

Examples of Key Performance Indicators:

Domain 1: Excellence in student learning and teaching practice

- Develops a statement of teaching philosophy/principles or self-reflective journal
- Prepares and delivers quality lectures and seminars
- Provides timely feedback to students

Domain 2: Excellence in contemporary curriculum design and engagement

- Contributes and develops unit/curriculum design and development
- Contributes and/or manages unit/tutor/major/course
- Undertakes unit and course evaluation and review

Domain 3: Excellence in scholarly teaching

- Develops statement and/or plan on scholarship direction
- Completes formal qualification in teaching
- Attends and/or presents at teaching-related workshops

University of Tasmania TPEs

- Need to identify and define the quality of evidence for individual teacher excellence (Gunn and Fisk, 2013)

Examples of Teaching Quality Evidence:

Dimension 4: Quality of evidence

- University priority: Peer observation/peer-review of teaching:**
- Documentary evidence of peer-involved developmental processes
 - Report of peer-review of teaching
 - Summative assessment of teaching

- Scholarly teaching:**
- Dissemination of outcomes from L&T projects
 - Grant Category for Scholarship of L&T

- Focus on personal philosophy of teaching:**
- e-Portfolio
 - Peer-reviewed teaching portfolio

- Evaluations:**
- Students
 - Learning analytics

University of Tasmania TPEs

Examples of Evidence for Teaching Quality and Performance:

Domain 1: Excellence in student learning and teaching practice

- Statement or excerpts from self-reflective journal in portfolio
- Student feedback; tutor or feedback from teaching teams; formal peer-review of teaching
- Formal peer-review of unit outline, unit materials and assessment

Domain 2: Excellence in contemporary curriculum design and engagement

- Independent reports from tutors and/or lecturers/Heads of School/Deans
- Demonstrates evidence of MyLO levels 0-5; student feedback
- Participation in projects/grants; funds awarded; outcomes of grant

Domain 3: Excellence in scholarly teaching

- Statement and/or plan presented
- Formal records of professional experience and training
- Publications; citations

Conclusion

- TPE Framework is important to:
 - Develop a shared repertoire around teaching and teaching excellence
- This presentation highlights the importance of:
 - 1) Effective cross-institutional benchmarking as an enabling process to improve engagement with teaching enhancement;
 - 2) Internal benchmarking to ensure reward and recognition processes are fair and robust

The TPE Framework:

- Provides clear statements of expectations for all academic staff
- Ensures individual accountability
- Encourages meaningful career conversations
- Reinforces the importance of externality in L&T
- Encourages internal and external recognition for high performers
- Encourages mentorship and peer-review

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