



Operationalising Academic Performance: Implementing Teaching Performance Expectations

Universities across the higher education sector are under increasing pressure from external and internal demands to demonstrate accountability and transparency in academic performance. External demands include significant periods of economic turbulence; international ranking; changing technologies as well as growing economies wanting to exert their position as higher education providers (Gunn, 2013; Debowski, 2012). Internal demands relate to the changing dynamic of the academic which includes an escalation in demands and roles of academics expected at different stages of their career (Gunn, 2013). In response to these demands, the University of Tasmania (UTAS) has undertaken significant changes in academic performance to align with the strategic plan, *Open to Talent: 2012 Onwards*. The vision outlined in the Strategic Plan is-

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...

In July 2012, the University approved the document *Opening UTAS to Talent: The UTAS Academic* which outlined performance expectations in research and teaching. The Research Performance Expectations (RPEs) and the Teaching Performance Expectations (TPEs) were further revised in consultation with the academic community, including the introduction of expectations for both community engagement and internal service. The RPE and the TPE components of the UTAS Academic included an extensive consultation process involving key expert stakeholder groups. Evidence collected to inform the development of the TPEs included an international benchmarking project on promotion processes and policies funded by the Higher Education Academy; two institutional-wide surveys (academic staff understanding of strategic learning and teaching initiatives and staff perceptions of teaching success in the promotion process); 19 written submissions and feedback from institutional-wide workshops. One of the key themes identified in the data was that academics welcomed the opportunity to focus on performance in relation to learning and teaching.

This study presents a review of the development and implementation of the UTAS TPEs (2012-2014) using the taxonomy developed by Gunn (2013). Gunn (2013) has developed a useable taxonomy for universities to use when operationalising reward and recognition which incorporates four distinct dimensions: 1) achieving educational demands on universities; 2) excellent structures; 3) demonstrating individual excellence; and the 4) quality of evidence. Gunn’s taxonomy was used to map the development and progress of teaching performance expectations to identify areas for improvement and align with other institutional processes. One of the key findings from the study was the identification of the

reward and recognition structures for teaching excellence have enabled parity of esteem with research across the University.