The Recognition and Promotion of Teaching Excellence in Research-Intensive Universities: The case of University College London (UCL)

Two propositions

Research is what determines a university’s global status, but teaching is what defines it as a true university

Research excellence is almost universally seen as the main route to promotion

However...

The student experience is becoming ever more important in terms of institutional reputation

Income from student fees is a crucial part of university funding

The student voice is increasingly heard

Academic Staff Promotions

The judgement of teaching contribution: criteria

Evidence required of both excellence and innovative contributions in all or some of the following:

- Undertake teaching that is research-led and also, where appropriate, research-centred (i.e. in which students undertake research);
- Undertake teaching that: where appropriate to the subject matter, properly integrates issues of diversity and equal opportunity; and acknowledges issues of gender, ethnicity, faith, nationality and disability;
- Contribute to a student experience that is intellectually challenging and that helps develop qualities of global citizenship, social responsibility, and leadership;
- Undertake appropriate professional development and training in teaching methodology/practice;
- Contribute to the development and conduct of assessment that is fair, just, transparent, fully recognises equal opportunities and challenges the creativity and abilities of UCL students;
- Undertake work as examiners, both internally and, as appropriate, as external examiners;

Academic Staff Promotions: criteria (continued)

- Innovate in teaching and learning and assessment methods, drawing on available technologies;
- Provide student support, appropriate and timely feedback and guidance as personal tutors;
- Work in the scholarship of their discipline and continue to be part of their scholarly community;
- Excellence in teaching from peer review, from student assessments and/or from examination results;
- Significant contribution to the subject through outstanding scholarship, the development of teaching and/or learning aids in the form of books, videos, computer assisted learning materials etc;
- Development of new modes of delivery of the curriculum;
- Enhancement of teaching and learning within and beyond the candidate’s department;
- Receipt of a Distinguished Teacher Award.

Teaching Portfolio

Expectation that detailed evidence of teaching achievement will reside in a teaching record/portfolio

Promotion to Professor: Two routes

Outstanding research coupled with a strong record of teaching, knowledge transfer / exchange and enabling

Exceptionally innovative / creative contributions to teaching coupled with a satisfactory record of research, knowledge transfer / exchange and enabling

Evidence required that the contribution is outstanding: recognised nationally and / or internationally and has been widely effective in enhancing teaching practice
Academic Promotions

In all cases (to Senior Lecturer, Reader, Professor, etc), the expectation is that candidates come through a departmental and faculty process. However, it is possible for a member of staff to propose him or herself for promotion.

Provost’s Teaching Awards

Founded in 2006; now in their fourth year.

Celebrate leadership in teaching and learning.

Demonstrate our commitment to the promotion of research-led teaching.

Each winner nominated by his / her Dean or Head of Department.

Four categories:

- Beginning of career
- Supporting learning
- Experienced academic staff
- Postgraduate teaching assistants

Provost’s Teaching Awards: key criteria

Impact
What is the impact of the teaching / activity on the students? How many benefit from it now and are likely to benefit from it in the future?

Innovation
How innovative is this activity? What evidence is there of new ways of assessing student progress, addressing difficulties experienced by international students, etc.?

Transferability
Is there evidence that this activity is transferable to other programmes / years / disciplines? Has some effort been made already to test how to replicate / translate the same activity or benefits to other contexts?

Winners receive a salary bonus of £2,500 (before tax).

They are also presented with a certificate at a large award ceremony.

Teaching Fellows

In 2006 the nature and status of the Teaching Fellow position were changed and enhanced.

Why?

In order to create a cadre of committed educators focused on teaching, learning, assessment and enabling in support of the overall academic mission of departments.
• A career structure for Teaching Fellows was developed:
  Teaching Fellow >>> Senior Teaching Fellow >>> Principal Teaching Fellow
  The Principal Teaching Fellow to be considered broadly equivalent to Senior Lecturer or Reader
• Further promotion is possible from Principal Teaching Fellow to Professor
• A Principal Teaching Fellow is expected to be an academic leader in terms of both strategy and delivering of teaching at UCL.
• Also expected to have a national leadership role and/or recognition as a national authority on the teaching of their subject and dissemination of appropriate scholarship, e.g. through organising national seminars, workshops, etc, sitting on editorial boards of appropriate journals, etc.

The result ?
• Three years ago, Teaching Fellows were perceived as "failed" academics
• Today they are seen as crucial engines of change, innovation and development in teaching, learning and assessment

Excellence and the UCL Community:
4 key areas of expectation:

- Research
- Teaching
- Enabling
- Knowledge transfer

Excellence and the UCL Community
Institutional obligations
- Develop and support high quality academic leadership for all areas of academic activity and enable UCL managers to attain the management competencies UCL requires of them
- Provide proper support for the development of individuals’ careers, including regular performance review
- Recognise excellence by ensuring that cases for reward and promotion of academic staff are rigorously and fairly assessed against clear and consistent policies, which acknowledge and value excellence in research, teaching and other modes of knowledge transfer, and enabling
- Offer opportunities and provide encouragement to undertake professional development and training of the highest quality
- Provide support for those undertaking roles as examiners, IQR reviewers, committee Chairs, representatives on national bodies and other roles of institutional citizenship
- Provide information, guidance and other support for academic responsibilities as a researcher and teacher

Teaching
‘We expect that all our academic staff will undertake teaching. This will commonly be at both undergraduate and postgraduate level, and includes research supervision.’

We expect that staff will:
- Undertake teaching that is research-led and also, where appropriate, research-centred (i.e. in which students undertake research);
- Undertake teaching that, where appropriate to the subject matter, properly integrates issues of diversity and equal opportunity, and acknowledges issues of gender, ethnicity, faith, nationality and disability;
- Contribute to a student experience that is intellectually challenging and that helps develop qualities of global citizenship, social responsibility, and leadership;
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- Provide student support, appropriate and timely feedback and guidance as personal tutors;
- Work in the scholarship of their discipline and continue to be part of their scholarly community.

http://www.ucl.ac.uk/excellence/
Education for Global Citizenship

- Able to recognise and value cultural difference
- Critical and creative thinker
- Entrepreneur with the ability to innovate
- Ambitious – but also idealistic and committed to ethical behaviour
- Willing to assume leadership roles
- Highly employable and ready to embrace professional mobility

Promoting Teaching and Learning

- Teaching / Learning conference
  Internal; held bi-annually
- Teaching and Learning Network
  Demonstrations and discussion of good practice across UCL
- Learning Technologies Support Service
  Training, support and advice for staff in the use of new technologies
- ESCILTA grants
  Funding offered annually to support teaching and assessment innovation
- Certificate of Learning and Teaching in HE (CLTHE)
- Programme for PhD supervisors
- Away day funding
  Offered to support departments with collective reflection on teaching

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Horizon Scanning: The challenges and opportunities of internationalisation

People Context
- Mobility of students
- Expectations of students
- Expectations of employers
- Staff make-up

Market context 1
- HE and advanced training set to become one of the largest enterprises in the world
- Not clear how this expansion will be managed and mediated
- Demand for international student places will continue to outstrip supply
- Competition amongst suppliers is fierce, with new countries entering the market
- Currently private sector provision is uneven – but this may change in the future

Market context 2
- Increasingly rapid globalisation of HE
- Impact of transnational education (TNE)
- Activities of international competitors
- Opportunities to internationalise reputation and build a global brand
- Opportunities for influence in strategically important regions

Geographical context
- For decades, UK’s main collaborations in research and teaching were with Western European countries and the USA
- More recently, with the support of the UK Government and the British Council, a focus on China and India
- Further diversification is now centring on other emerging economies, e.g. Brazil and Russia
- Growing understanding of the need for continuous diversification, building on established markets and developing new ones
- The need to decide on both partner institutions and partner countries for strategic, mission-centred reasons

A changing world context
- ‘Universities lose billions as recession deepens’
  (headline, University World News 14 Dec 2008)
- Capital losses widespread
- Slowing building and recruitment processes
- BUT
- Greater demand for up-skilling and training
- Government investment in HE in some countries
- TNE is now a global activity – with more leading universities involved in overseas provision

AN UNPREDICTABLE INTERNATIONAL SCENARIO FOR THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE
Why should we internationalise our curricula?

Some definitions:

- Internationalisation of the curriculum is the process of designing a curriculum that meets the needs of an international student body.
- Internationalisation ... prepares students for careers in the global economy.
- Internationalisation ... is about students developing global perspectives.
- Internationalisation ... is about students developing cross-cultural capability.

EACH OF THESE IS ONLY A PARTIAL DEFINITION

Implications for the university

Institutional and departmental / Faculty Strategies

Employability agenda

The specificities of our own student and staff bodies

The research vision and strategy

Public Engagement and community visions

Conclusion

Internationalisation of the curriculum is about:

- Institutional change
- Changing us as educators
- Changing our students as learners
- Changing our relationships with stakeholders in business, industry, NGOs etc.

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