

University of Hertfordshire HR Excellence in Research

CASE STUDIES OF EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

Case Study: The School of Education Professional Development Framework 2014-15 for academic staff

Academics within Schools of Education often join the academy from a previous career as a teacher in school. This practitioner expertise can lead to an understanding of the various scholarship roles as separate rather than intrinsically connected and mutually enhancing. In the School of Education at the University of Hertfordshire we saw the potential of the Vitae framework as a way to challenge this view and to clarify the symbiotic nature of research and practice. We used the Vitae framework to produce two versions of a wider *Professional Development Framework* (PDF), one for academic staff and one for professional staff (see attached).

The PDF echoes the Vitae framework in its structure and some of its content. We have amended it to reflect the particular focus of academic and professional work within the School of Education. The PDF is currently being used as a tool to support colleagues in planning for their professional development during formal appraisal sessions.

The framework is proving extremely useful in helping academic staff to plan for the use of research and scholarship activity to support both the development of their practice and their contribution to knowledge building through publication.

As part of their professional development, all professional staff are engaging in an enquiry into an aspect of practice which they seek to develop, guided by the staged approach to enquiry proposed in the PDF (see attached).

The School of Education online journal, **LINK**, is a vehicle for making visible in a visually interesting way such research and scholarship undertaken by colleagues within and linked to the School of Education. It aims to support contributors in developing confidence and skills in writing for publication whilst also exploring their developing professional voice. It is envisaged that work published in this journal will be used to support practice and be subject to ongoing comment and critique by peers. Authors will then, where appropriate, be encouraged to develop their contribution into material to be published in external, peer reviewed journals.

LINK can be accessed at: www.herts.ac.uk/link

Example of a support pathway

e.g. Interest in developing new ways to ensure that students respond to emails quickly

Identified development needs: investigating practice; sharing expertise

STEP 1: Identify an issue or interest – September 2014	Students do not respond to emails quickly
STEP 2: Investigate your issue on your own or with a colleague –September 2014	Investigate reasons for this by talking with students
STEP 3: Design new practice – October 2014	Develop a new plan for contacting students
STEP 4: Finalise plan for new practice - extended team meeting October 2014	Discuss new system with line manager and colleagues
STEP 5: Implement new practice – October 2014	Implement new contact system
STEP 6: Check progress with line manager – appraisal discussion November 2014	Share progress on introduction of new system
STEP 7: Gather data on new practice –January 2015	Talk to students and colleagues about how new practice is working for them
STEP 8: Review and evaluate impact of new practice – 6 th month appraisal review	Evaluate impact of new practice on student response to emails

The School of Education Professional Development Framework 2014-15 for professional staff



This *Professional Development Framework* represents a new approach to planning for and supporting the professional and career development of professional staff within the School of Education.

Aligned to the Vitae Researcher Development Framework (http://www.herts.ac.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0020/11981/vitae-rdf-subdomains-2011.pdf), it reflects particular School of Education priorities for 2014-15. It articulates the knowledge, understanding and attributes which professional staff in the School need to continue to develop to realise their potential and to support the ongoing development of the School.

It is designed to:

- support colleagues in evaluating and planning their professional and career development
- help line managers to support colleagues' development

Support for professional development is provided via *Support Pathways* – see back for example.

