Promoting and recognising teaching development of SBS Institute staff

This guide aims to provide information to HoIs so that they can support staff in their Institute to gain recognition and reward for engaging with teaching in a scholarly way. The School has a suite of web pages dedicated to the support and development of teaching and learning. Here you can find details of the School Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) Committee, our SBS teaching communities and gaining teaching qualifications. Supporting the personal and professional development of staff involved in teaching is an important, and sometimes overlooked, task and is a stated aim of the University's Teaching and Learning Strategy 2030.

In addition to staff in traditional roles who teach, the School now employs staff holding teaching-related job titles such as 'Lecturer in Education', 'Teaching Lecturer' and 'University Teacher', who often have raised teaching expectations specified in their contracts. Such staff, here-after referred to as 'Teaching-focused staff', should be considered equal to any other academic in their Institute and, as such, should be included in PI meetings and similar activities.

Staff Development: Teaching qualifications

The School encourages all teaching staff to gain professional recognition for good teaching practice. Workload time allocation of 50 or 100 hours (dependent on category and route, normally for two years) is provided **for all Institute staff** undertaking teaching qualifications. Independent track Research Fellows are **required** to engage with these qualifications from an early point of the fellowship **as a condition for retention**, as stated in the current SBS-ESAT policy and it is important to encourage them to do so.

There are four categories of teaching qualifications or Fellowships from Advance HE (AdvHE), which is an externally accrediting body, making these qualifications internationally recognised and portable. The categories are Associate Fellow (AFHEA), Fellow (FHEA), Senior Fellow (SFHEA) and Principal Fellow (PFHEA) and are commensurate with teaching roles and teaching experience.

The University supports staff and students to attain teaching qualifications through three different taught or mentored routes;

1) Introduction to Academic Practice (IntroAP): a taught route to Associate Fellow
2) Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PgCAP): a taught route to Fellow
3) Edinburgh Teaching Award (EdTA): a mentored self-paced route to any category

An individual, unsupported, direct application for AdvHE Fellowship is also possible.

All routes and all categories involve development of the candidate's own practice and therefore require that the candidate is engaged in teaching-related activity. Anyone that has recently supported or is directly engaged in teaching should be eligible to work towards at least AFHEA accreditation.

The School SoTL Committee runs events to orientate and support candidates throughout the process of gaining AdvHE accreditation, providing and spotlighting relevant CPD. Staff seeking AdvHE accreditation are expected to seek support through the School SoTL Community Teams site (join code **r8oubvg**).

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Staff Development: Teaching-related Research

All staff within Institutes, irrespective of job title, have time allocated in their contracts for research and scholarship and can use this time to engage in biological research or teaching-related research. If requested, teaching-focused staff can be allocated appropriate laboratory space or integrated into an existing lab to develop biological research.

Teaching-related research can range from evidence-based development of some aspect of a person's own teaching to full pedagogical research projects that are publicly disseminated. Educational research projects follow similar research project structures as any other research project. Specific funding sources for educational projects do exist both within and outside the University. However, the scale of funds necessary and the availability of funding for educational research is considerably less than for biological research and the outputs from educational research can be more varied (such as resources for teaching, thought-pieces and blogs). Additionally, relevant journals for full educational research publications tend to have lower impact factors. As with all research, teaching-related research should be judged on its own merits and without comparison to biological research funding or outputs.

All staff engaged in teaching-related research are expected to engage with the SoTL Community for collaboration, support and dissemination opportunities. A modest SoTL fund to support attendance at educational conferences, small projects or publication costs is administered by the SoTL Committee but in some cases this can also be covered from Institute budgets. Funding opportunities for teaching-related research are also highlighted at the bottom of the weekly funding e-mail from the Research Office.

Staff Development: Community support and teaching-related opportunities.

All teaching-focused staff and other staff interested in developing their teaching portfolio should be actively encouraged to engage with the SBS SoTL Community where information and opportunities for developing good practice in student education can be accessed. Research staff with minimal teaching are also encouraged to join the community or to rely on teaching-focused staff expertise for evidence-based curriculum development or improvement of learning and teaching practices.

Staff engaged with the Edinburgh Teaching Award will have an allocated mentor. Other staff can be mentored by teaching-experienced staff through the School's existing Coaching scheme or sector-wide schemes such as the HUBS Biosciences Educators' Network (BEN) or the AdvHE Aurora scheme for women.

Teaching-related roles and activities that staff can be encouraged towards include School-appointed leadership and management roles such as course organising, year leads, convenors of exam boards, Institute Education Leads, SoTL Chair, Cohort Leads, Learning and Teaching Committee membership, EDI Committee membership, Programme Organiser/Directorships, Academic Misconduct Officer, Director of Students, Director (or Associate Director) of Teaching, or taking a lead on a special project of benefit to the School.

College and University opportunities beyond the School include Academic Development networks, working groups, academic user groups, Appeals Committee, EdTA mentoring and/ or assessment and Senate membership.

Beyond the University there are numerous networks or groups which can be discovered by engaging with the School SoTL community. Examples include The Scottish Early Career Educators Network, The Royal Society of Biology Bioscience Awarding Gap (BAG) network and Early Career Lecturers network. External examining roles can be found through this JISC managed message board.

Staff Development: Preparing for Promotion

As for other academic staff, all teaching-focused staff are eligible for promotion from University Teacher to Lecturer, through Senior Lecturer to Professor. The annual review processes, forms and University criteria are the same for all staff. Promotions can be teaching focused, research focused or a balance of both. However, for a member of staff who is teaching-focused or has significant teaching-related activity, simply doing a lot of teaching extremely well will not be sufficient to progress beyond Grade 08.

Teaching-related promotion cases may solely focus on the teaching-related qualifications, educational research and leadership roles described above. Leadership in teaching areas and/or involvement in educational projects may prominently feature in the promotion cases but markers of esteem and impact may be less familiar to assessors. Given the differences in funding and outputs from teaching-related research, traditional expectations around published outputs or grant funding should not be applied for teaching-related cases.

Some examples of teaching-related markers of esteem are outlined in the Exemplars of student education document although it is worth noting that some exemplars are out of date and that the exemplars represent neither a check-list nor an exhaustive list. A teaching-related promotion case is unlikely to cover all stated criteria at any particular grade and may cite examples that are not covered in the Exemplars document. An obvious example particular to the School of Biological Sciences would be Institute Leads or Chair of the SoTL Committee which are not found in the Exemplars. Categories of AdvHE Fellowship are noted in the Exemplars document (e.g. FHEA is a cited example of achievement at Grade 08). While an AdvHE qualification is a clear marker in a promotion case, it is neither necessary nor sufficient (i.e. promotion to grade 08 is possible without FHEA). If you are uncertain about an example when preparing a promotion case, it could be discussed with your Institute Lead or the Chair of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) Committee. As with all staff members, a promotion case can also be made that relies more heavily on one of the elements (e.g., leadership in student education), with little or nothing from the other areas.

It is recommended that HoIs supporting staff with teaching promotion cases, if unfamiliar themselves, consult with another pedagogically-experienced senior member of staff, or the SoTL Chair, to ensure fairness in advancing these cases across different institutes.