

## Learning & Teaching @ Newcastle Podcast **UKPSF Special**

Hello and welcome to Episode Twelve of the Learning and Teaching at Newcastle University podcast. My name's Emma McCulloch and I'm a guest host this time around and I'm based in the Learning and Teaching Development Service in the Academic Practice team.

In this episode, we will be exploring the benefits of pursuing a category of fellowship with the UKPSF and HEA accredit accredited process. So we'll be looking at what UKPSF is and we'll hear from colleagues across the university who have gained various categories of fellowship.

So the UKPSF itself is the UK Professional Standards Framework, which has three actually has four categories of fellowship, Associate Fellowship, D-1 Fellowship D-2 and Senior Fellowship D-3. There is also a category four which is principal fellow and that is supported by the university but is externally reviewed.

So throughout this episode we will discuss the benefits that can bring to your practice, reflecting on your practice, drawing out all of the goods and effective teaching that is happening in your everyday practice. How you then go and impart that on your colleagues and how you show, you know, mentorship, leadership and support in that upholding of the professional development.

So in this episode, we will hear from the pro vice chancellor, Tom Ward. We will also discuss what it was like to go through the process with an associate fellow, a fellow and a senior fellow. And we'll also have the viewpoints of the mentors on the various schemes and the assessors. But first, it's over to pro vice chancellor, Professor Tom Ward, on why it's important to investigate. UKPSF in your practice.

Hi, everyone. I wanted to say a few words about the UK Professional Standards Framework, which can sometimes feel a bit like a bit of obscure QA inspired jargon, but in fact is a useful tool kit that we should all be aware of. The university's mission is about excellence in research based education. And the UK Professional Standards Framework is a carefully developed approach to benchmarking and enhancing education and to valorising effort in education. It helps us maintain autonomy in curricular content alongside a realistic framework to articulate and celebrate good reflective practice. It's incredibly important that we take every opportunity to boost the visible professionalism of what we do in education. I've been a principal fellow of the HSA, as it was called, for almost 10 years, and I'd urge everyone to look at the fellowship scheme as an opportunity to reflect on their own practice, to engage with the carefully thought through

framework and its content. And just to take the opportunity to think through their own role as an educator. Sometimes effort in education can feel as if all the rewards and feedback are intangible. Effort and research produces research outputs effort in education sometimes feels like it disappears into a vacuum. But in fact, there's a huge amount of reflective practice in education across the campus and the framework is a way of celebrating that. I think the content of the professional standards framework is thoughtful, well evidenced and useful in itself, and I'd urge everyone to look at it and become familiar with some of its main points. And of course, it's important both corporately and individually to look at becoming a fellow of the academy. The real value comes from using the PSF to help identify skills, to develop, to find methodologies, to boost reflective practice. But it also is good for us to celebrate our achievements by becoming fellows. It also connects you to a welcoming and informed international network of other fellows. And if you look now on the advance H.E. website, you'll see fascinating profiles and interviews with people who've used the professional standards framework all over the world. And it's quite inspiring to be part of that story and get those other insights from other countries. So I wish you well in all you do in education and commend to your attention the professional standards framework.

Thank you. Next, I spoke to Nehal Hassan, one of our recent and successful applicants for associate fellow about her experiences of the UKPSF. First of all, I asked Nehal how she found the process and why she chose to take up the opportunity of gaining recognition for the teaching she'd done so far.

So at the beginning, before knowing anything, just reading about the advertisement, that there would be courses to assist research students about applying to the associate fellowship. I was just confused and nervous. I was curious to know more and how to go through the process. I talked with my supervisors who endorsed the training and encouraged me a lot too to apply for. Then I started the application, attending the courses I started to learn a lot about teaching techniques and strategies. It was really interesting for me specially that I have already participated in academic roles in my home country in Egypt before coming to the UK for seven years. And it was really interesting to identify the differences between different cultures and different, you know, the background and the way we teach students in the UK and what we do we do in Egypt. And maybe what enhanced my experience during the course is that I had just given two tutorials for undergraduates here in the UK, so I started just to reflect on and apply what I have been taught in the course on what I have did in the two tutorials I gave in in the UK compared to the many classes that I already taught in Egypt. And it was really interesting that I found many let's say it's not mistakes, but many things that I might not do in the past in the best way that they could do. And I just realised that in the future I would do lots of changes in my teaching style and teaching

techniques and that it was interesting for me to know that for every type of teaching, you should adopt a certain style and certain technique. That was really new for me. I just thought it was like a talent. You are a good teacher, but actually during the course I just noticed that and realised that it's not only this talent, you can way improve your skill and the way you deliver the information to the student and you can make it make the experience itself very interesting for yourself before being interesting for the students. So I just realised from the course that although we think during our teaching, especially when you do teaching for a long period of time, it might get a little bit boring. No, it can be very interesting. You can do lots of new things every day. You can just tailor your way of teaching to the type of students that you're teaching to and to the type of teaching environment that you are working on. Online teaching is different from classroom teaching. Teaching for large groups is different from small groups. So all these were areas that were like an eye opener for me through the course.

Secondly, I asked her how she found the process in terms of time and fitting in around her studies.

It was all about planning. And as a PHD student, you know that everything needs to be planned well in advance. And because I used to do this besides my PHD. So the plan was quite tailored based on the pathway of my PHD. And when things are getting too busy with my PHD. So I knew that I have no time except the four month to apply for the associate fellowship. And I think that was the key, putting the deadlines put into plan based on these deadlines and then you commit to the plans that you did. And this is a skill that I believe all PHD students would get by time through their PHD study. So that was the part related to planning. Then when I started and took the decision that, OK, well, I will do this and started to take the course. It was quite unclear for me how the application would be filled. So I just started the six sessions of the LTDS course, and at the beginning I started to understand more and more about what should be mentioned in the application, and then at the last session of the LTDS course, we got introduced to how the application is filled and what are the items that we are evaluated in the application. So things became more clear and then I started to structure my application. So. Well, we need to talk about one, two, three and four. My previous experience is focussed on small group teaching, large group teaching, undergraduate teaching and postgraduate teaching. These are the UKPSF framework. So I need to reflect from my experience and what I learned through the course into my application, and that's where things went. And then I received quite a lot of support from the LTDS team from you, specially in devising my application and giving feedback, which was really constructive and helpful. And I think it saved a lot of time for me. And that's how things were done at the end.

Thirdly, I asked her how she found delving into subject specific pedagogy and how that has applied and improved her practice, perhaps. And will she be looking to that to drive her practice in the future?

That was the most interesting part, because although I have practised teaching for seven years before coming to the UK, that was my first time to know that as a pharmacist I need to understand more about education. And there is a literature behind teaching. I just thought that we learn how to teach students from our teachers are good teachers, how they teach us and how they inspire us. By the way, they teach us. So that's how we learned. And we got to teach future students. And then I realised, oh, there is science behind this. There is something called science of medical education. There is literature behind how we teach pharmacy, how we teach medical information to students, how we can like transform the knowledge from patients beds to classrooms. This is a science, a huge science. So that was really interesting to understand this. And I think it made things how we teach students more structured and organised so you can just have a plan forward before starting your class with a student. So it was quite difficult for me to get this literature while working on the application. But with the help of the course and your team, the LTDS team, it was much more easier to find this information.

So next, I spoke to Dr. Fred Windsor on his journey to gaining Fellowship Recognition Festival. I asked. So how did it all start? Why did you want to go through this process and what was your motivation behind it?

Yeah, well, I mean, I'm at the stage of my career now where I'm starting to look at permanent positions both in the UK and abroad. And obviously recognition of teaching something as an early career scientist, but as an early career, research is quite difficult to achieve sometimes. And I've done a lot of teaching previously, but I haven't got a formal qualification in that. So as well as thinking about career development, just gaining some recognition for the sort of members teaching both formal and informal that I've done thus far and sort of applying for the fellowship with the HEA was something that really appealed to me. So obviously a career development is always key, but. Just yes, some form of recognition. I think once you get a lectureship, it's quite obvious you do a lot of teaching. But until that point, you're generally employed in research positions. But that actually still does quite a bit to teach you on the side. So it's yeah, it's quite interesting now. It seems to be well, I'm sure everyone says it's competitive when they're looking at their respective job market. It's something that a lot of places are starting to request now, even for lectureship positions, not necessarily senior leadership positions. Some formal recognition of your teaching experience and the experiential offered by the fellowship. This particular appealing because a lot of my work previously has been sort of leading field courses and so quiet still formal teaching in the sense that it seemed encompassed by a module within a module whether it's

field methods or, you know, one or two modules surrounding field courses. But sometimes it's not seen necessarily as something with much pedagogy behind it. Actually, that's not the case. So it sort of gave me a good excuse and a good sort of opportunity to present that. And for myself, but also to show to others that actually is sort of the experience through pathways quite yet quite rich in pedagogy. Even if you haven't necessarily formalised it by designing a module yourself as a module lead.

How did you find the process and did you sign into the readiness for fellowship workshop or delve into doing it alone?

Yeah. So my P.I is really quite proactive and takes an interest in sort of developing the careers of the postdocs in those groups. I suggested that all of the post-doc go along and we have a range actually we have a research fellow. He's most sort of further, further through that career. And yeah, we sat down and had a discussion about like what level of teaching experience we had and then attended. Yeah. The sort of introductory, introductory and like information dissemination seminar or workshop. Yeah. I knew about if I didn't, I had no idea what was involved in the kind of the format of the application. So how did you find the mentors of working with the mentors. Yeah. Yeah I think I mean COVID threw a spanner in the works of everything. So I think because people work from home, mentors went around and said, I've got some really good comments back and really helpful comments. And that worked really well. I got two sets of comments, one from the mentor and one from the academic practice team as well. And that really massively improves the application. It has definitely because it has to be written in quite a specific way. And I thought I had a reasonable handle on it. But yeah, I mean, just the comments really helped just like hone it and make it just totally ironclad.

Did it showcase other pedagogy? Did you explore more subject based pedagogy?

I was going to say that, yeah. I think I mean, I'm saying about fieldwork work earlier or field courses earlier. Often this is a misconception that there's not much pedagogy underlying it. But actually, yeah, it really reinforced. My sort of understanding of the pedagogy and actually is really refreshing because when I was doing the research for it on the pedagogical side, there were things that I'd sort of been doing. I thought, oh, that's good, good practice. And you know, that didn't quite work. But this seems to be better than looking actually through the pedagogy research or pedagogical research. There was support from other people and other people have done much more systematic research rather than just sort of trial and error with groups of students saying, you know, actually, this is you know, you could do it this way. There's these different avenues as these different things. So I think that was the same sort of

supervision, the mentorship of students and taking different approaches with students. Although I had a sort of reasonable awareness, the pedagogy involved or surrounding some of the things I was doing, I wouldn't say I was going to do the research looking at it, then applying it. So it was quite nice to see it reinforced. But I think now I've sort of. Got into it, dove into those areas. I think I would in the future actually look at some of those things.

How long did it take you from the initial workshop to submitting that final application?

I think it was just shy of a year, but that wasn't that wasn't sort of total dedication. I wasn't, you know, working on it weekly. That was so fits and starts in terms of getting it done yet. I think you do need that time. It's only I drafted a first go at it quite early on just to try and get some get some thoughts down on paper and then have a go. And then I sort of left it for a bit and then came back to it. I think that helped. Yeah, but I mean also it is quite a dynamic document because again, I was doing a lot more teaching over COVID because of adopting the kind of virtual environments. I actually think for early career researchers, that opened up a lot more teaching opportunities for them.

Next I spoke to Jude Heed from the School of Pharmacy about her process and journey to gaining senior fellowship. So how did it come about? What was your motivation behind the desire to gain recognition for senior fellowship?

Well, I think that it can have already done a CASAP course, to become a fellow sort of kind of gone through that process. But I have had quite a lot of experience. I've worked in another university for a number of years. And I guess I've never kind of kind of documented that, like the experiences that I had tried to get any recognition for any of those. So I guess that's probably, you know, whereas most people, do the fellow at more early stage of their career is probably a little but late in doing that. And that kind of brought to my attention, I suppose, the kind of framework and the kind of requirements that you would need to meet. I guess before that I was less exposed to what they were. And so looking into that, I could see that I had lots of experience that would qualify me for it. So kind of was keen to be able to get the recognition for that. And I was very much encouraged this very much encouraged from within the department for people with kind of significant levels of experience at more senior levels to try and kind of go for that.

Did you come along to the Readiness for Fellowship workshop and what was your process when applying on capturing your evidence? How did you record it? Did you make reflective notes? Did you have voice notes? How did you go about that?

Yeah. So that was that the first stage was attending a workshop, which was kind of kind of getting you in tune with thinking about your own experiences and how they might align with the requirements that you had set to me to have a senior fellow. And we kind of talked about different experiences in groups and that was kind of quite useful as a starting point. And then from that point, you kind of got given a mentor. And I think that they recommended that you met with a mentor straight away. But I think I really had quite a good idea of what I wanted to do. So I can just kind of set to do. And that's just a way in getting pen to paper and document and my own experiences and think that what is quite useful, I'm quite a reflective person anyway. But it is quite useful to have between to reflect not just on this is what I've done, but kind of why you did things in the way that you did them and almost going back to some of the literature from a kind of... Instead of looking at the literature to decide how you're going to do something, kind of going back retrospectively and thinking about how that fits with the literature, it was quite an interesting exercise. For example, I took over the years, had lots of experience of mentorship, but probably hadn't thought about the kind of literature around mentorship and how my practices fit with that and didn't fit with that. And so it gives you a little bit of reflection around growth. You might have lots of experience, but you have to kind of kind of continuing to develop yourself in that way. So I can put that together first and then got in touch with the mentor after that.

Why did you choose the written route and did you ever consider the dialogue option?

We talked about it. The two different options to bring that workshop and they talked about how it was probably an equal amount of work to be done in either of those approaches. Whereas maybe you can have colleagues who talked about it and you just kind of rocking up and you talked about your experiences. And I was I was very clear that that's not kind of what's involved in that kind of assessment. So I was very conscious of, I suppose, feeling like a one time opportunity to do something. And what if I didn't serve myself very well or didn't think or reflect very well on my experiences during an oral. examination in want of a better word. So I kind of I think that idea of being able to of get things down, get somebody to look at and revise it and be kind of happy with that. You're submitting a good on your best representation of yourself. I guess I felt more comfortable with that. I think part of how you are successful in gaining senior fellowship is how you work with support, a mentor or a coach, people in. And how did you do that to show that in your application? Because that's a key difference between senior fellowship and fellowship. I think that it made us reflect on they can have their say because I worked for fifteen years or something in academia. It made me think about the different kind of ways in which I and added approached or applied myself

and that sort of setting school from being like enacted things, or in my previous employment, being an academic body to people. Was it a form of mentoring and then like coming to Newcastle and being part of it. It's the same things. So from executive board. We had some staff who were very new to this. So they were kind of like we had been research assistants and things. But we're quite new to go to pharmacy in a program and being able to kind of support them, I suppose, in development of assessments and those things that have quite a lot of experience and doing to kind of slightly different roles, I suppose, in that I've done over the years.

What advice would you give someone going for a senior fellowship?

I guess, it can feel daunting to think about how a lot of words that you've kind of got to do to put down and see and feel the need to have you give the space bit of time to do it. But I think that if you maybe can just start by attending a workshop and kind of go on for it and starting to think about. Sometimes I think people think I don't know quite know what I have done that. We're not probably used to being the advocate for yourselves and saying I've done this and I've done that and kind of feels a bit awkward even when it's just on paper. And so I think you can kind of think about what, you know, jotting down the different things that you have and develop ideas about what you can write about. And then, you know, it's just it's not like finding of spare week. when you've got nothing on which might be impossible, but just trying to set aside. And hour here and there to kind of write on it because he can always refine it later as you can get new ideas down and use in a mentor because obviously they have an experience if you know what they're looking for. And that's quite useful to be able to get something down. And then it's just a matter of adapting and going back. But don't put it off until you've got loads and loads of time, you see. And how is it shaped, how you think about the future and your future in teaching and future growth and continued professional development. Yeah, I think that. We can even not just think the momentum is just take an example. One thing that I might have looked at, but sometimes a pharmacy obviously quite a big program. And so sometimes it can kind of fall into the trap of just doing things in it in an old fashioned way and thinking, I think we need to do this in pharmacy. It's a big program and it's just the way that it is. And I think that doing something like that does help turn it into those thoughts, because you do know actually there is other ways of doing things. And it is kind of I think I've always I'm passionate about teaching and always kind of wanting to review and develop things. And it is good to think about how, you know, how you can improve. And reflecting on some of the literature, I think can be helpful to kind of keep that end in front of your mind when you know, when life is busy and you just cannot count things out and you try different things as well. I try that and we'll see. No, that's great.



Thank you very much. So next, I spoke to our chairs of the single recognition panel, the panel that make the final decisions about the reviewers comments and feedback on the application process. So we've got Pam White, head of Anatomy, and Dr. Jess Young from the Careers Service. They are both mentors and moderators and have been moderators. And now, as I said, co-chairs of the panel that make the final decisions. This is the full conversation I had with Pam and Jess about the benefits of being a UKPSF mentor. Here is Pam.

So what would you say were the benefits of being a UKPSF mentor?

I think it's hugely important. It's a really valuable part of what I do. As I was just discussing how I probably would not set foot outside of FMS thought bubble. That is medicine, pharmacy, speech language and anatomy, which is where I teach. It's so vulnerable to get out of that little bubble and see how to teach, really valuable to watch what they're doing and steal some things that they're doing well. So yeah, really valuable.

So I'm based in professional services. I'm in a teaching team, based in the careers service, which sometimes feels like a bit of a weird place to be you're almost like academic staff, but not academic staff. So it's been super useful for me. It's put me in contact with the mentors, it's put me in contact with mentees from all across the university who are really quite passionate about teaching and learning. So as Pam said, it gives me ideas for my own practice, but it's also made me feel more connected and a more part of a community. and on a personal level. It's very rewarding to do something that in a relatively short space of time, you can really help somebody to achieve something and have an impact. I know that we all do that with our students, but it tends to be over a longer period of time. Whereas this you quite often get feedback saying thank you. I really understand that aspect of things now and I really didn't grasp it before, but just quite rewarding and quite nice.

Do you find that it takes up a lot of time or is it you don't mind because it's so you know, you gain something back from it?

I think it's it looks like it's going to take a whole lot of time. And I was with one of my mentees the other day and completely planned to stay a half an hour and it was so good. I stayed for three It is really worthwhile if you if you get into a teaching situation that you really enjoy then it is worth spending time with that mentee.

Yeah. Yeah, I would agree. It's really nice to be doing something a little bit different from the day job feels like a bit of a break. It kind of makes me feel re-energised. I suppose that going back to your practice does not. And like everything, it has peaks and troughs off across the year. But that's the nature of what we're doing our job sort of day-To-Day anyway. So as

long as you're prepared for that, it's fine. And reading a lot of the applications as it because you're both assessors on the schemes. It kind of gives you ideas and like Pam said you steal ideas and you think, oh, that's great and we'll try that out. It's good to know that, you know, other people are having similar challenges and how they've addressed them. But you wouldn't think sometimes outside of own subjects. Yeah, I've definitely found that beneficial. I also think it opens up roots for kind of cross cooperation. A couple of my colleagues, my junior colleagues who are on the programme. They've got to talk to meet with people from classics and are looking at kind of the language we use in anatomy and how that might help students with specific learning difficulties to overcome what they perceive are challenges and what we do. And I'm not sure what would ever happen without them meeting each other on the program. So for me, I never meet people myself. So I think that is a hugely important part as well.

And then it's an added bonus. Our regular host of the podcast, Ben Steel, was asked by PVC, Tom Ward to talk about his recent application for fellowship and how he found that.

Hello, everyone. This is Tom Ward and I'm with Ben Steel from LTDS, who's kindly agreed to answer a few questions about why he chose to become a fellow of the HEA. Is it still called a fellow of the advanced HE. So, Ben, your primary role is not as an academic. You're not you're not a lecturer. No. Why did you. What made you think about applying for a fellowship?

Well, I think the role that we do in LTDS we've got many roles in LTDS and my particular part of the team and let P, which is the learning and technology project team we support and provide various different types of support, really to the whole university, whether that be for projects pre-pandemic so making the curricula and making their module and their content, more technology, more digital and more blended. That's the key one. The blending of it was really important for them. Post-2020 post March 2020. Obviously things changed even more so all roles became more diverse and we provided a lot of support to support academics, especially in the time when video recording became a massive thing and zoom, teams. Essentially our role trying to get more content digitally became everything need be digital. And so 2020 gave me a big boost and springboard actually there's a lot of evidence here that can back up this claim across all of the key indicators.

That's great. The last 18 months must have been an incredibly busy time for you and people in your kind of role. Yes. Why did you think this was important enough to devote a bit of time to it?

Well, I think it gives it that. How I think a better way, that stamp of a stamp of approval of the service that we provide. I'm just one part of it. We have many people who are fellows and senior fellows within LTDS service and we really supported the university in this time. And that recognition from people with university that moderated my audio or oral presentation and also going out to the wider advanced HE. Because our role was massive last year.

And at the centre of the professional standards framework is the idea of reflective practice. Could you just capture what it was you? You reflected on it in forming your submission.

Good question. So the reflection I did, I did in a couple of different ways. I quite like to make notes every now and again. Just capture my thoughts especially as I have one to ones with my manager or the PDR, which is a starting again very shortly. But I actually took some time on a quiet Friday and dedicated two hours here two hours there and actually just put it in a simple story. More than anything, I initially started out with far too much information. My story wasn't in the right order after a practice run through with someone in my team and my mentor. And then just simplified it. The actual reflective practice to talk with someone and make me go right. Well, all of this noise is just noise. Let's just focus on the on the key bits. And that told the story better and more succinct.

I think that's great. I think that realisation that you had too much material and too many things and that to edit it down is a common one. Yeah. So thank you for your time and congratulations on becoming a fellow. And I hope you'll encourage lots of other people to also have a look at it because it's a it's an enjoyable and important process. Thank you.

Hope you enjoyed listening to colleagues from across the university discussing their routes to their various categories of fellowship. Thank you to all our guests today and for taking the time out to discuss it. It's been very enjoyable to meet and discuss it with you all to find out more about where to go if you're thinking about a category of fellowship in the future.

Go to the show notes and all the information will be there as to how to sign up, how to come along, how to get involved.

Thank you for listening. And don't forget to like subscribe and tell all your friends.

I'll see you next time.