

Title: **Professional Teaching Standards in a Post-1992 University**

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Abstract:

Session Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session delegates will have identified one possible model for using teaching standards to enhance curriculum delivery.

Session Outline

There is currently much discussion on the use of teaching standards in higher education (HE), prompted by the Government's White Paper on HE and the role of the Higher Education Academy (HEA) in introducing teaching standards to the sector.

The use of peer observation at the University of Sunderland dates back over ten years. During this period the ethos of this has deliberately evolved from that of peer observation, where a judgement is made about the performance of the observed to peer review, where both observer and observee learn from the practice. At the end of the peer review process no judgements on performance are made or reported rather dissemination of good practice is encouraged and any staff development requirements identified. Peer review therefore, is not seen as a system for judging performance or ability or reporting such but a system which encourages reflective practice, open classrooms and staff development.

The University has recently developed a HEA-accredited Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching and Learning in HE which is mandatory for all new and inexperienced academic staff. The programme includes a module entitled Practical Teaching Standards which must be passed in order to gain the named award. This module is assessed by a series of peer observations undertaken either by the observee's School Teaching and Learning Co-ordinator or Academic Area leader. This represents an apparent conflict between what the University expects of its existing academic staff, peer review, and what it insists its new academic staff undergo, assessed peer observation by a member of relatively senior staff.

This presentation will describe how this apparent inconsistency has been addressed and suggests a way forward which other universities may find useful.

Session Activities

25' An account of how the University of Sunderland has approached the issue of teaching standards with an emphasis on what we have learnt from this process.

20' Questions and discussions on the lessons learnt and how they might be applied elsewhere.