

**Title:**                   **When staff are the students: engaging staff as student partners in the design of academic professional development programmes**

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### **Session Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this session, delegates will be able to:

- Examine how we can collaborate with colleagues as partners in the design of academic professional development opportunities, and in so doing enable them to form partnerships with their own students in the design of programmes, modules and assessment strategies.
- Identify methods to operationalise programme development partnerships including data-gathering and evaluation activities, structured conversations, formal reporting and on-going project management.
- Explore the value of incorporating non-accredited professional activities alongside accredited programmes in an over-arching CPD Framework for staff who teach.

### **Session Outline**

For over 15 years, the DIT's Learning Teaching and Technology Centre (LTTC) has offered a suite of accredited postgraduate programmes and modules for staff. Demand for these programmes and modules has increased since 2013 with 187 participants graduating and a further 221 completing modules for continuing professional development (CPD). DIT was the first higher education institution (HEI) in Ireland to state a requirement that newly appointed lecturers complete a postgraduate qualification in teaching and learning.

During 2018, we have been reviewing our modules and programmes to revise and revalidate them. We have also undertaken a substantive quality assurance review of our Centre. In the case of academic professional development programmes, academics are the students. Through our review and redesign, we have been mindful of recent research and the development of the "students as partners" perspective as well as the differing contexts in which academics are working (Bovill, Cook-Sather and Felten, 2011; HE

Academy, n.d.; Healey, Flint and Harrington, 2014). We have seen this process as an opportunity to revise our offerings but are also aware of the meta-learning. We can reflect on the experience of designing in this way and bring our learning to our engagements with other programme teams.

In this paper, we explore how we have taken a partnership approach with current and former students on our programmes in order to inform the review and redesign. We have conducted questionnaire-based research as well as focus groups and desk studies to evaluate the programmes. Our findings were distilled into a formal report for quality assurance purposes, but also informed the design of a CPD Framework extending beyond the traditional provisions. The Framework takes account of the unaccredited professional development opportunities also open to staff, and aligns with the National Professional Development Framework recently introduced in Ireland (National Forum, 2016).

### **Session Activities and Approximate Timings**

- Presenter introductions and context (5 minutes)
- Programme and module review in partnership: how we have undertaken the review and evaluation of our provisions with graduates and colleagues (10 mins)
- Programme redesign in partnership: how we have redesigned programmes and contextualised them within a CPD Framework and the National Framework (5 mins)
- Roundtable or Small Group Discussion (15 minutes)

Possible themes for discussion:

- Reflecting on partnership - what can academic developers learn to support their practice by working in partnership with our colleagues as students? What methods are practical and most valuable in a partnership approach?
- How do we ensure that our partnerships lead to actions in the redesign and formal revalidation of programmes and modules, thinking particularly of teaching, learning, and assessment strategies, inclusivity, and the place of new technologies?
- Summarising and formal close (10 minutes)

### **References**

Bovill, C., Cook-Sather, A. & Felten, P. 2011. Students as co-creators of teaching approaches, course design, and curricula: implications for academic developers. *International Journal for Academic Development*, 16(2): 133-145

HE Academy. n.d. *Students as Partners in the Curriculum (SAP): Change Programme compendium*. York: Higher Education Academy.

Healey, M., Flint, A. and Harrington, K. (2014) *Engagement through partnership: students as partners in learning and teaching in higher education*. York: Higher Education Academy.

National Forum. (2016). *National Professional Development Framework for all staff who teach in higher education*. Dublin: National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education.