

SEDA Spring Conference 2024



Session Title: Is Academic Credit for Taught Education Development the Baby or the Bathwater?

Session Type: Lightening talk (10 mins)

Main presenter(s): Beth Picton, Durham University

Co presenter(s): N/A

Session Summary: Baby or Bathwater? Is the postgraduate certification of academic practice a necessity in the design of initial professional development for university educators.

Session Outline: Many institutions require staff to complete a postgraduate qualification during their probationary period (Gosling, 2010). This has been viewed by some as professionalisation of university teaching (Kanuka and Smith, 2019). But with ever increasing demands of the time of academic staff, many of whom hold doctoral degrees, is a postgraduate qualification in academic practice necessary to work as a university teacher? With initial professional development, surely the focus is on improving teachers skills, thereby impacting on students' experiences (Gibbs and Coffey, 2004).

With AdvanceHE taking over from the Higher Education Academy in offering recognition of professional practice in higher education through their fellowships scheme, has this become the "badge" that many seek to enhance their CV? AdvanceHE have accredited over 173,000 academics with fellowship (AdvanceHE, 2023) and with increasing adoption of their scheme in institutions globally, this is now the focus for many in academic development.

In recent years some institutions have taken the decision not to offer postgraduate qualifications but instead focus on the development of staff to the fellowship level (D2) of AdvanceHE. The question is, have they thrown out baby or bathwater? This lightning talk gives a glimpse into the reasons behind the decision to move away from postgraduate qualifications by certain institutions as well as the critical reflections of a postgraduate certificate programme director considering adopting a similar approach.

References: Gibbs, G. and Coffey, M., 2004. The impact of training of university teachers on their teaching skills, their approach to teaching and the approach to learning of their students. *Active learning in higher education*, 5(1), pp.87-100.

Gosling, D., 2010. Is your PGCert compulsory for new staff? A summary of responses from the SEDA Jiscmail list. SEDA Jiscmail.

Kanuka, H. and Smith, E. 2019. Perceptions of the content and employability value of credentialed teaching certificates, *International Journal for Academic Development*, 24:1, 73-85, DOI: 10.1080/1360144X.2018.1545130