



University of Birmingham Teaching Academy support for recognition of teaching excellence

1. Context

An important benefit of the University of Birmingham Teaching Academy is the mutual guidance and support that academy members can offer each other. Such support could range from assistance with specific personal goals (such as preparing an application for a Birmingham Education Fellowship) to more general discussion of career opportunities for those wishing to pursue career progression through teaching excellence. The TA will work closely with CLAD-LS and People and Organisational Development (POD) to provide guidance that will complement rather than duplicate existing mentoring arrangements, including those in individual Schools and Colleges.

This paper outlines the types of guidance and support the Teaching Academy will offer and suggests ways in which such guidance may be facilitated.

2. Aims of Teaching Academy (TA) Guidance and Support

TA guidance will offer guidance and support to academy members who wish to apply for:

- Promotion on the grounds of teaching excellence, including promotion to Reader and Professor on the teaching focussed route and to Senior Lecturer on both two and three legged contracts.
- Internal or external awards for teaching excellence, including Birmingham Education Fellowships and National Teaching Fellowship awards.
- Higher Education Academy recognition through BEACON, the University of Birmingham Professional Recognition Scheme.

It will also offer support to Birmingham Education Fellows to ensure that they are able to make the most of their award and progress to nomination for a national award should they wish to do so.

3. The TA guide role

TA guides will have already achieved the goal, or a very similar goal, to which the colleague they are assisting aspires. They will be able to offer:

- Share their expertise and experience of working towards the goal
- Offer suggestions for making an application that will be successful or for working towards being in a position to make a credible application
- Read and comment on application drafts

All discussions between colleagues under this scheme will be confidential, with the guide or TA only disclosing the content of their discussion with the consent of their partner.

4. Guidance and support arrangements:

a) promotion applications

- **Teaching-focussed professor and reader.**

Estimated requirements: approximately 5-10 each year across all Colleges.

TA guidance for teaching-focussed professor and reader will take the form of one-to-one support. The TA will match individuals who aspire to teaching-focussed professor or reader with individuals who have already achieved this. Where possible, guides will be from the same or a cognate College as the applicant.

- **Senior lecturer promotions**

Estimated requirements: 20-30 per year across all Colleges.

The TA will offer guidance and support on the teaching strand requirements for promotion to senior lecturer to all eligible staff.

This will take the form of a series of workshops/action learning sets of (max) 4 people led by individuals who have already made successful applications. Workshops will be run in the second semester of an academic year in time for promotion application in the following autumn (see Appendix I).

b) professional recognition

Fellow and Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy

- From May 2015 applicants for Higher Education Academy (HEA) Associate Fellow, Fellow and Senior Fellow status will be able to apply via Beacon, the University of Birmingham Professional Recognition Framework.
- Beacon aims to build engagement with the UK Professional Standards Framework across the institution and provide a route to recognition for experienced staff and for those not served by existing HEA accredited programmes (e.g. librarians, learning technologists and skills support staff).
- It is a requirement of the HEA that applications are assessed by individuals who already hold equivalent recognition. As there are a limited number of Senior and Principal Fellows in the institution (10 and 2 respectively), an important initial aim of Beacon is to increase the number of individuals within the institution who can assess such awards and to build institutional capacity for

mentorship and peer support. The intention is to build disciplinary capacity in the schools using those who successfully gain recognition

- Guidance for professional recognition through Beacon will be led by the academic practice team in CLAD-learning spaces. The support offered will include mandatory attendance at two workshops: an initial orientation and a writing workshop. As part of the process applicants will identify a submission buddy and offer reciprocal peer review of draft submissions. There will be scope at this point for creating disciplinary support groups / learning communities.
- The TA will assist the academic practice team in CLAD-LS by establishing a disciplinary support group for professional recognition in each College or across a group of cognate colleges and by facilitating recruitment of members who are able and willing to act as guides or assessors.

Principal Fellow of the Higher Education Academy

Estimate of demand: 1-2 annually, increasing to 2-4 annually over the next few years

- Applications for Principal Fellow are made direct to the Higher Education Academy.
- Guidance and support will take the form of one-to-one coaching by existing Principal Fellows as required. As there are only two principal fellows currently at Birmingham, advantage will be taken of our collaboration with Nottingham to expand the pool of potential coaches.

c) Teaching award submissions

- **Birmingham Education Fellowships.**

Estimate of demand: 10-15 people per annum

TA guidance for BEF applicants will take the form of an annual series of short workshops annually following publication of the call for applications. Where possible, workshops will be run by previous BEF winners and will offer general guidance on the criteria and the scheme and an application troubleshooting session.

For each award, a mentor will be identified who can offer the new fellow advice and support on making the most of the award and identify ways in which they will contribute to the ongoing educational enhancement activity. Responsibility for governance of award expenditure will lie with the academic practice team on CLAD-LS (?)

- **National Teaching Fellow.**

Estimate of demand: 3 people with submissions in the current round; up to 3 people with submissions in development.

TA guidance for National Teaching Fellow submissions will take the form of action learning sets of current NTF applicants with existing award holders, supplemented by individual coaching as required. It is anticipated that assembling a convincing case for nomination will take at least one year, possibly longer in some cases and the possibility of working towards an NTF will be discussed with likely candidates (such as BEF award winners) at an early stage.

- **Educational Enhancement Awards.**

Estimate of demand: 20 staff across all four educational enhancement themes

TA guidance for applications for Educational Enhancement Awards will consist of a series of short information sessions that explain the requirements of the award.

Publicity

- An annual calendar of TA/CLAD-LS guidance activities (Appendix I) will be posted on the TA web pages and advertised each semester in Education Matters. Publication via College mechanisms will also be used to ensure that all staff are aware of the support available.
- The TA website will also signpost POD or other activities of a more general nature (such as effective interviewing) that may be of assistance to applicants. The TA will discuss with POD what would be appropriate and may commission short courses on particular topics.
- A teaching recognition event will be held each December to celebrate all those who have obtained recognition for their teaching excellence during that calendar year.

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