

# **A PROFESSIONAL ACADEMIC PRACTICE FRAMEWORK FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF BOLTON**

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## **A Professional Academic Practice Framework For The University of Bolton**

### **Introduction**

The Strategic Issues Group of the Academic Board has been deliberating for some time on the question posed to it by the Board, namely what academic and professional values and practice should the University of Bolton be characterised by. An earlier paper (Report of the Strategic Issues Group on Professional Practice December 2002) defined the terrain of the debate and described some of the work which made up the Bolton 'experience'. Since that time the Group has considered a number of internal and external papers and contributions as part of its work. The approach it has decided to take is to produce a 'Professional Academic Practice Framework' which will help to define our expectations of the academic and professional values characteristic of a modern university and specifically those to be modelled by the new University of Bolton. In producing this framework we wish to emphasise the key values firmly embedded within the current Strategic Plan of: engagement; enterprise and excellence. We also wish to assert the centrality of the link between theory and practice; the twin concerns of academic and professional development and the importance of higher education as a force for social justice and equality, in the University's history and its future orientation.

The framework is put forward as a guide to our policy and planning in all areas, but primarily in the areas of academic development; learning, teaching and the curriculum; research and knowledge transfer; and relationships with individuals and groups with whom we work. The aim is to try and articulate an 'ethos of place' so that our practices are informed by a shared sense of values and understanding of what the University aspires to be. This in turn is intended to provide the context in which we expect staff to work and to determine the range of activities and roles we expect them to undertake.

# 1 The Influences on Professional Academic Practice at the University of Bolton

## a) The definition of a 'Modern University'

The characterisation of certain universities as 'modern universities' is not intended to imply that they do not share some of the traditional characteristics of universities (the pursuit of knowledge, independence of thought, the cultivation of critical, moral and ethical awareness). Rather, it is to suggest that they have a particular concern with the application of knowledge and the impact universities can have on the social, economic and cultural environments in which they operate. More often than not this view of the university centres upon the concept of **Engagement**, of universities being 'within society' and acting as agencies of knowledge generation and knowledge transfer within the overall framework of a knowledge-based economy. It also assumes a greater **integration** of the university with other civil organisations and the private sector, through the development of a complex nexus of partnerships and networks, whereby the university can influence and impact upon social, economic and cultural change. The challenge arising from this definition is to retain the values of academic autonomy and independence of judgement while recognising that higher education is a public service which is accountable to various stakeholders and can exercise a powerful influence on both individuals and wider communities. As one study summarised the role of the modern university:

universities make contributions to government and civil society as well as the private sector, assisting not only with economic performance but also helping to improve quality of life and the effectiveness of public services

(J Molas – Gallent et al: *Measuring Third Stream Activities: Final Report to the Russell Group of Universities*, Brighton, 2002)

## b) External Strategic and Policy Expectations

- i) The White Paper, *The Future of Higher Education* (DfES 2003) clearly positioned universities as having a crucial role in the wider economy and society, noting that

'in a fast-changing and increasingly competitive world, the role of higher education in equipping the labour force with appropriate and relevant skills, in stimulating innovation and supporting productivity and in enriching the quality of life is central'

From this vision it emphasised 4 key priorities:

- raising the status of teaching and learning and the rewards for excellence in this activity
- concentrating research excellence in a small number of research intensive universities
- expanding the role of higher education in transferring knowledge to and engaging with business and the community
- the expansion of access and the creation of a truly mass higher education system.

- ii) The Higher Education Funding Council's interpretation of these priorities has been manifested in its Strategic Plan and policy initiatives to the point where funding is explicitly used to steer the sector in particular directions desired by government and to encourage institutions to recognise and play to their strengths. The HEFCE Strategic Plan (2003-08) identified 4 main purposes of higher education and encouraged higher education institutions to position themselves more deliberately as pursuing excellence in a selected number of these key purposes, namely:
- teaching and learning
  - research
  - the contribution of higher education to the economy and society
  - widening participation and fairness of access.

The draft HEFCE Strategic Plan (2006-11) confirms these purposes as HEFCE's priorities, while noting the overarching aims of 'enabling excellence', building upon institutions' strengths and ensuring that UK HE can withstand increasing global competition. The assumption is that as higher education becomes increasingly 'market-driven', with the introduction of variable fees and the growth of private as well as public degree awarding bodies, universities will have to be even clearer about their specialist strengths and market position.

HEFCE's expectation also is that university staff will need to be prepared to support institutional missions much more specifically and directly, commencing with the 'Rewarding and Developing Staff' initiative but moving more directly into the steering of university human resources strategies via the corporate planning and reporting process. Similarly, HEFCE initiatives to strengthen 'Leadership, Governance and Management' reflect the view that universities need to be securely and strategically managed and publicly accountable for their actions and policies.

- iii) Clearly therefore, universities are now much more accountable to government and funding bodies and while encouraged to operate within a market context, have to both respond to strategic steers from government and demonstrate their alignment with key national priorities. Added to these influences are those exercised by regional and local agencies – Regional Development Agencies; local authorities; 'meta-regional' initiatives, such as the 'Northern Way' and sectoral bodies concerned with workforce development and skills, the best example being the NHS, which is a major public funder of higher education. We can thus speak of universities as having only a 'relative autonomy' from outside pressures and acknowledge that university policies and the role of university personnel must relate, albeit critically and not subserviently, to the policy agenda of key external agencies.

It is the role of a university's strategic vision and strategic plan to articulate how this **critical but engaged** stance can be taken and carried forward as an inspiring 'leitmotif' of policy and practice.

### c) The Bolton Strategic Vision

i) The current Strategic Plan (2003-09) articulates a powerful statement about the nature of our work which is fully consistent with the values and objectives of a modern university and which must have a determining influence on our academic practice. Distilling the document into some key strategic values and characteristics, which the University of Bolton ought to be known for embodying and championing, we can highlight the following:

- innovation and enterprise
- quality and excellence
- inclusivity
- reflexivity
- professionalism
- engagement with the external world
- scholarship
- praxis (the combination of theory and practice in learning)

ii) Trying to sum up what these values and characteristics mean by way of a 'signature' University of Bolton identity we might draw upon the concept of being a **Transformative** university. This term can be applied across a number of dimensions - individual; social; civic; cultural; economic – and can influence the way we wish to act and encourage a vigorous and healthy academic practice. The term was first defined in the report of the **Task Force on Higher Education** (World Bank and UNESCO, 2000) as a means of emphasising the constructive, powerful and critical role which universities can play in economic, social, cultural and civil formation, especially in developing countries. However, it has an applicability in all societies as transformative universities can:

- unlock potential at all levels of society, helping talented people to gain advanced training whatever their background
- create a pool of highly trained personnel that attains a critical size and becomes a key national resource
- address topics whose long term value to society is thought to exceed their current value to students and employers
- provide space for the free and open discussion of ideas and values (*Task Force on Higher Education, 2000*).

iii) In discussing the notion of transformative universities, a recent study has been careful to acknowledge both the **functional** role which universities play in knowledge-driven growth and the **critical** role as questioning and contesting forces seeking to challenge prevailing orthodoxies and assumptions. Thus, Brennan et al (citing a World Bank Report of 2002) identify 4 key functions of universities:

- the capacity to train a qualified and adaptable labour force
- the capacity to generate new knowledge
- the capacity to access existing stores of global knowledge and adapt them to local use
- the transmission of norms, values, attitudes and ethics as the foundation of the social capital necessary to construct healthy civil societies and cohesive cultures.

But they also add a final role for universities as:

providing protected space – intellectually, temporally, physically and politically – to allow people, individually and collectively, to think the unthinkable, to push the limits of the possible, to reflect and reassess. Not quite an ‘ivory tower’ perhaps, but a safe environment set apart from the interests, orthodoxies and pressures of the day. (Brennan, King and Lebeau, *The Role of Universities in the Transformation of Societies*. An International Research Project, Centre for Higher Education Research and Information/Association of Commonwealth Universities, 2004).

- iv) We could therefore characterise the University of Bolton as a **transformative** university, seeking to make a ‘practical difference’ (to use the words of our strategic plan) to **the individual, the economy and society**. This definition is dynamic enough to shape our academic practice and our professional conduct in ways which reflect our central purposes. It can also embrace the contributions of our different disciplines and the interdependence of teaching, scholarship and professional engagement in shaping our academic culture, as well as cutting across the separation of functions identified by the Funding Council and the false dichotomy between the ‘traditional’ and the ‘modern’ university.

#### d) The Concept of the Bolton Academic

- i) Our Human Resources Strategy as agreed with the Funding Council, identifies the need for ‘a multi-skilled and flexible academic workforce’ while noting that all academic staff must be engaged in scholarly activity leading to new knowledge and all must be capable of applying professional practice to teaching and learning. As part of its definition of a range of ‘Bolton Professional’ roles, the Strategy identifies the concept of the ‘Bolton Academic’ and a range of functions which Bolton academic staff can be expected to perform, namely:

- Leading and Engaged in Learning and Teaching
- Curriculum development
- Evaluation and review
- Scholarly activity leading to new knowledge or research outputs
- Knowledge transfer
- Professional Practice
- Recruitment/Marketing
- Learning and Learner Support
- Partner relations
- Academic administration
- Team working
- Academic networking
- Departmental and institutional involvement
- Self development

- ii) If staff are to engage with the concept of the ‘Bolton Academic’, they need to appreciate how it fits with their own identities and their contribution to the university’s key purposes and values. Professional and individual identities and behaviour must be congruent with the broader purpose of the university. Most academic staff derive their personal and professional identities from two sources: their subject disciplines and their role as educational professionals.

In addition they may have a third source of vocational or practitioner identity based upon their current and/or previous relationships with a particular form of occupation and profession. Finally, there may be an emerging sense of what a 'higher education professional' should be from the work of the Higher Education Academy on developing a 'Framework of Professional Standards' (HE Academy 2004). Thus we can note that there are a number of influences which will shape the academic practice of the Bolton Academic and that individuals will be linked to a number of 'communities of practice' by virtue of their multiple identities as:

- salaried employees of the University
- subject academic specialists
- members of specific professions or vocational sectors
- educational and pedagogic practitioners

What is important is that a university integrates and values these various identities in its expectations and treatment of staff and that our definition of professional academic practice is multi-dimensional and flexible enough to incorporate them. Thus we do not pigeon-hole ourselves as a 'teaching only university' or a 'widening participation university' but as a transformative university where a multiplicity of academic practice and expertise is needed to achieve and promote our objectives and our institutional identity.

To put greater flesh on the bones of the 'Bolton Academic' concept we therefore need to define those academic practices which combine to deliver our university vision and place the work of individual staff within a clear professional framework.

### **Summary**

Putting together the elements in this first part of the paper we can say that the University of Bolton seeks to be a transformative university, positively influencing individuals, society and the economy through its policy and practice. Our academic staff will be expected to position themselves within a multi-dimensional definition of academic practice and the role of the Bolton Academic, which acknowledges both the critical and the applicable characteristics of higher education. The dimensions of academic practice we will support and to which we expect commitment from staff (the precise individual contributions to be determined through staffing strategies) are:

- Learning, Teaching and Curriculum Development
- Enterprise, Research and Knowledge Exchange
- Community Engagement and Partnership Development

The main elements of these three dimensions of professional practice and the language we will use to describe our expectations are outlined in the next section of this paper.

## 2 The Three Dimensions of Professional Academic Practice at the University of Bolton

### a) Learning, Teaching and Curriculum Development

i) Our current Teaching and Learning Strategy recognises both the remarkable diversity of the people we educate in terms of social background, experience and learning styles and the diversity of the contexts in which learning takes place – classroom; at a distance; electronic mode; community-based; practice/work-based; full-time and part-time. The ‘Bolton Student’ is indeed not a ‘typical’ higher-education student and it must therefore be assumed that the ‘Bolton Academic’ will need to be professionally able to respond to four types of diversity in particular:

- diversity of the background and experience of the student body
- diversity of the context in which learning will take place
- diversity in the modes by which learning will take place
- diversity in the curriculum, in order to reflect and engage with the concerns and backgrounds of our student body and the partner agencies we work with and to which we contribute our professional educational expertise.

ii) It follows that the Bolton Academic should therefore be expected to have pedagogical expertise in what might be called the skills of ‘**instruction**’ and have the opportunity to extend their professional competence and training in higher education pedagogy and its application to different types of student and different contexts. But, they should also be aware that the higher education experience, especially at honours degree level and above, amounts to more than just ‘**instruction**’. A more obvious characterisation of higher education teaching and curricula is represented by the ‘**Androgogic Learning**’ model which has been defined in a previous paper from the Strategic Issues Group (Glover et al 2002) as incorporating the following characteristics:

- problem-centred rather than content-centred
- permitting and encouraging the active participation of the learner
- encouraging the learner to consider past experiences and to reinterpret experience
- collaborative as opposed to authority-oriented learning relationships
- planning, conducting and evaluating the learning environment as a mutual activity between learner and teacher
- a constant appraisal-re-evaluation-re-design cycle of learning activities
- engagement in activities that are experimental and thought-provoking not one-way transmission and absorption
- two-way communication to establish the objectives and methods of the learning process
- seeing the teacher as a ‘learning guide’ to the process of learning rather than a manager of content.

The model, while obviously an ideal type, reflects well the notion of higher education teaching as a **critical activity** in which staff engage as **reflective practitioners** both in the **delivery** and the **design** of curricula and **recognise** the **active** role which students and their experiences have to play in the learning process.

iii) The emphasis in (i) and (ii) above on the **process** of learning, teaching and curriculum development should be complemented by an equal emphasis on the **content** of the curriculum and its academic authority, currency, relevance and openness. The source of the academic standing of what we teach and what students learn is **scholarship**. Professional academic practice must recognise the value of individual and collective scholarship and the impact it has upon the quality of the learning we offer. Scholarship does not simply mean research for publication or the creation of new knowledge, artefacts or processes. For example, Ernst Boyer, offered a far more inclusive definition which contains four dimensions:

- the scholarship of discovery (traditional, 'pure' research)
- the scholarship of integration (for example textbook writing or critical reviews and re-interpretations of existing scholarly work)
- the scholarship of application (enterprise and consultancy; professional service, community and cultural outreach and engagement)
- the scholarship of teaching (consideration and reflection upon the practices of learning and teaching).

(E Boyer, 1990, *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate*)

Similarly, Universities UK has emphasised the broad implications of the term **Scholarship** as embracing research but also extending far beyond what might be most valued by the HEFCE Research Assessment Exercise. It notes, for example, that 'many practice-based disciplines advance knowledge in ways which fall outside the RAE criteria, and that the innovative application of the knowledge which emerges from research, whether RAE assessed or not, also equips teachers to pass on the active skills of research and innovation which form part of the Honours degree formation process .....'  
(Universities UK paper 1/03126(b) – *The Interdependence of Teaching and Research*). Equally, the paper notes a HEFCE study in 2000 which identified the generic value of scholarship to all academic practice, commenting:

However, there is a difference between academics being engaged in creating new knowledge themselves, and being alert to developments in their subject, including new discoveries, so that they can interpret and reinterpret the knowledge base of their subject to inform their teaching (HEFCE 2000).

The University must therefore value **Scholarship** as a defining element of professional academic practice but it must be a scholarship which is inclusive and reflective of the diverse practices and expectations of our many academic and professional disciplines. Scholarship must also be **measurable** in terms of its impact and effectiveness on the individual member of staff's practice and upon the quality of the University's curriculum. Our view must be that:

The University regards **Scholarship** as those activities which maintain the currency and authority of individuals' subject and professional knowledge and enable them to remain abreast of academic and educational matters. The nature of such activity may include critical review and revision of academic and educational material relevant to teaching; publication; professional body involvement; practitioner activity; consultancy; involvement in academic networks and in the quality assurance and assessment processes of the higher education community.

The allocation of time for such activity within the academic contract carries with it the requirement that performance and outcomes will be managed and monitored through the Professional Development Plans of all academic staff.

The purpose and direction of scholarly activity will be linked to the overall academic and strategic priorities of the University and the roles that individuals play in the maintenance and enhancement of the quality of the University's academic activities (teaching, learning and curriculum development; enterprise; research and knowledge exchange; community engagement and partnership development; supporting students and supporting learning).

iv) We can therefore summarise the main characteristics of professional academic practice in Learning, Teaching and Curriculum Development as:

- pedagogical expertise and ability to respond to student diversity in terms of learning style and need for support
- reflective practice and the incorporation of an androgogic approach to learning and teaching
- subject and professional knowledge
- regular, planned and appropriately defined individual scholarly activity

On the basis of these definitional characteristics we can begin to respond to the Higher Education Academy's proposal to establish a new *Standards Framework for Teaching and Supporting Student Learning in Higher Education* (Higher Education Academy Consultation Paper, August, 2005). The proposals seek to define a 'broad framework' against which higher education institutions define their own professional development processes and ensure that all staff are appropriately and professionally prepared for their roles as higher education practitioners. Five **areas of activity** are defined, with three proposed standards of individual practice.

The areas of activity are:

- Design and planning of learning activities and/or programmes of study
- Teaching and supporting student learning
- Assessment and giving feedback to learners
- Developing effective environments and student guidance and support systems
- Evaluation of practice and continuing professional development

The Academy also notes and defines the **Core Knowledge** expected of higher education teachers and the **Professional Values** which they should incorporate in their practice, including the commitment to incorporating the process and outcomes of relevant research and scholarship. If we define our professional academic practice in the multi-dimensional model proposed in this paper we will be more than able to match the Academy's expectations of programmes of accredited continuing professional development and enable our staff to secure individual professional accreditation. Thus other sections of this paper will refer further to linkage with the HE Academy's professional standards framework. The University will expect however, that the three characteristics of academic practice defined at the beginning of section iv) will be a requirement of the Bolton Academic.

## b) Enterprise, Research and Knowledge Exchange

- i) We commonly use the term 'Enterprise' to group together a broad range of activities which often shade off into other areas of activity which might be termed consultancy, applied research and knowledge exchange or transfer. To use the definition in the 2003-09 Strategic Plan:

we define enterprise as all those activities which promote innovation, creativity, problem-solving, knowledge transfer and entrepreneurship in the education of our students and in the services we provide to business, public organisations and the community.

'Enterprise' is therefore used in 2 senses within the University: 1) as an organising framework for the management and development of its non-mainstream, commercially funded activities. 2) as a characteristic and set of values which we wish to see embedded in the culture of the institution and its learning and teaching, curriculum development, research and knowledge exchange activity. Internally, therefore, there is often a blurred boundary between the types of activity which are classified under the term Enterprise and it may be better to think in terms of a continuum between the knowledge which we **acquire and create** and its **application** in different contexts through **engagement** with business, the community and public organisations.

- ii) This broad definition links in to the Funding Council's concept of 'Reach Out' activity which might be said to have two purposes – Engagement with Business to promote Wealth Creation; Engagement with the Community to promote the Quality of Life. Our Enterprise activity must be broad enough to embrace both these purposes and the concept of Enterprise must not be seen as a narrowly 'money-making' one.
- iii) We must therefore emphasise the continuum between:

Knowledge Creation  
Knowledge Application  
and Knowledge Transfer

All of this can contribute to reach out and engagement with business and the community and help **transform** practice in those areas, simultaneously building communities of practice with other external practitioners. In this way we can also embrace traditional Research activity and recognise that it is part of the active role we play as a university in shaping external developments. Research is, in fact, defined in the HEFCE Research Assessment Exercise sufficiently broadly for it to embrace the continuum between knowledge creation, application and transfer. The definition is:

original investigation undertaken to gain knowledge and understanding. It includes work of direct relevance to the needs of commerce and industry, as well as to the public and voluntary sectors; scholarship; the invention and generation of ideas, images, performances and artefacts, including design, where these lead to new or substantially improved insights; and the use of existing knowledge in experimental development to produce new or substantially improved materials, devices, products and processes, including design and construction (RAE Guidance).

- iv) The University's concern is with the integration of research, enterprise, knowledge transfer **and** its relationship to teaching, ensuring the creation of an appropriate environment for high quality learning and teaching, especially at honours degree and masters levels. Staff can be expected to contribute to the **interdependence** between these linked dimensions of academic activity in different ways but the overall impact must be to create a University environment which encourages the following position:

At higher levels of Teaching, the process of learning is more like Research. Teaching in Universities should have a different flavour from Teaching in other settings. It is more immediately connected to Research and the development of the discipline, the professional area and the nature of progress in society. To destroy that continuum and link might actually endanger the future of society. ... universities have a key role to play in underpinning Government policy debates on issues like sustainability, progress in creating a knowledge society, access to all HE students to forward looking and up-to-date curriculum and to processes of learning that involve criticality, active questioning and growing independence towards lifelong learning: ie, research (UUK, *The Interdependence of Teaching and Research*, 1/03/126).

- v) This agenda can be most effectively pursued if we ensure that our enterprise and research activity are closely linked to our professional practice, our teaching and our engagement with key communities and organisations (see Para 2a iii, preceding). 'Enterprise' thus becomes part of the dynamic and necessary engagement with the material that we study and the knowledge we transfer rather than a 'separate' entity from research and teaching. It becomes also an essential part of how we perform our roles as scholars, teachers and learners. In practical terms this leads on to the skills and knowledge needed to ensure that staff contribute fully to this dimension of professional academic practice. We might formulate these skills/knowledge requirements as:

- critical reflection and generation of ideas, concepts, theories
- application of theory to practice/problem-solving
- problem-identification, proposal formation
- linkage and interaction skills
- project management skills (supported by other professional expertise)
- bid preparation and costing and pricing skills (supported by other professional expertise)
- the ability to write, present and explain complex ideas and their application – communication to diverse audiences.

The development of the above should be part of the professional formation of the 'Bolton Academic'.

### c) Community Engagement and Partnership Development

- i) The antithesis of the stereotypical notion of the university as an 'ivory tower' detached and independent from society is the concept of the 'engaged' university. While recent developments in 'third stream' funding have sought to intensify the 'reach out' of universities to the wider world, a narrow interpretation of this notion is that it primarily relates to commercial and consultancy activities linked to the limited definitions of enterprise and knowledge transfer which were rejected in the previous section. However, the broader notion of universities as 'transformative' institutions engaged in the overall development of social and human capital provides a richer context in which expectations of professional academic practice can be defined.
- ii) Our concern should be with civic, community, social and cultural engagement as well as the commercial and economic, recognising the positive impact universities can and should have on community capacity-building, social and individual well-being and the health of civil society. The main areas where universities can impact upon the wider community are:
  - promoting access to higher education
  - stimulating technological change
  - contributing to economic regeneration
  - making full use of human skills
  - contributing to the civic culture and public values

These areas embrace a wide range of activities – academic; cultural; social; economic – and are a major reason why universities are so valued by developing societies and developing regions. They add up to the 'university effect' which is now increasingly measured by, for example, HEFCE's annual 'HE - Business and Community Interactions' survey and by regional development agencies. A crucial aspect of this effect is evident when regeneration and community development are linked to the enhanced cultural, social and human capital which universities create (see L Edwards, *Evidence for the benefit to society of the civic, social and community activities of HEIs and their individual staff* HEFCE, 2003).

- iii) The social and community role of the university is one which the University of Bolton can naturally undertake and to which it is committed. This role means developing partnerships with a wide variety of 'non-academic users' and being willing to engage in the relationship and network development necessary for embedding the university within its broader community. This activity is not simply a 'one-way street' of transferring knowledge, skills and support outwards, it is a means whereby the university and its staff engage in wider communities of practice and broader cultures. The results can be mutually beneficial - refreshing and enriching personal academic practice and the currency and relevance of the curricula, research and scholarship that is produced. It can also provide a valuable learning experience for students, introducing them to practical contexts where they can apply their theoretical knowledge and practise their developing professional skills.
- iv) To enhance Community Engagement and Partnership Development within professional academic practice we need to recognise the types of activity which we would expect academic staff to be involved in, some of which are already part of enterprise and research. The following are areas where we would expect academic staff to be involved and to develop expertise:

- widening participation and progression partnerships with schools, colleges and other educational providers
- community liaison with minority ethnic and social class target groups
- professional relationships with practitioners and employers
- local authority and public sector engagement
- cultural and artistic involvement
- action research, consultancy and knowledge transfer
- regional/sectoral engagement in relevant areas
- support for students working in practice and on voluntary activity
- electronic networks linking the university to other organisations
- collaborative course delivery/involvement in educational consortia and partnerships/lifelong learning networks.

### **3 Expectations of Professional Academic Practice**

#### **a) Dimensions of the Academic Professional Role at the University of Bolton**

We can summarise the different expectations arising from the three dimensions of professional academic practice in the grid attached. The attached diagram also illustrates how the various elements of academic practice interact and reinforce the quality of the University's activities.

The overall purpose is to define and support the 'professional formation' of the Bolton Academic and to make clear the University's expectations of staff who have an academic role and the policy, support and monitoring framework which will enable their continuing professional development. The precise role of individual academic staff will be negotiated and agreed through the normal processes of appointment, performance review and professional development planning.

## DIMENSIONS AND EXPECTATIONS OF ACADEMIC PRACTICE IN THE UNIVERSITY OF BOLTON \*

| Dimension  | Expectation of Skills, Knowledge and Contribution<br>(HE Academy 'Professional Standards' to be incorporated in University Expectations)  | University Framework for Support and Enhancement of Staff Continuing Professional Development  |
|--|---|--|
| <p>1 Learning, Teaching and Curriculum Development (Section 2a refers)</p> | <p>i Pedagogical expertise and ability to respond to student diversity in terms of learning style and need for support</p> <p>ii Reflective Practice and the incorporation of an androgogic approach to learning and teaching</p> <p>iii Subject and professional knowledge</p> <p>iv Regular, planned and appropriately defined scholarly activity</p> <p>v Achievement of HE Academy Professional Standards in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design and planning of learning activities and/or programmes of study</li> <li>• Teaching and supporting student learning</li> <li>• Assessment and giving feedback to learners</li> <li>• Developing effective environments and student guidance and support systems</li> <li>• Evaluation of practice and continuing professional development</li> </ul> | <p>Rewarding and Developing Staff Strategy</p> <p>Learning and Teaching Policy</p> <p>Professional Academic Practice Framework</p> <p>Staff Development Policy</p> <p>Professional Development Planning</p> <p>University In-House Qualification in Teaching and Supporting Learning</p> <p>University Professional Development Framework and Staff Development Activities</p> |

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <p>2 Enterprise, Research and Knowledge Exchange (Section 2b refers)</p>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i Critical reflection and generation of ideas, concepts, theories</li> <li>ii Application of theory to practice/problem-solving</li> <li>iii Problem-identification, proposal formation</li> <li>iv Linkage and interaction skills</li> <li>v Project management skills (supported by other professional expertise)</li> <li>vi Bid preparation and costing and pricing skills (supported by other professional expertise)</li> <li>vii The ability to write present and explain complex ideas and their application - communication to diverse audiences</li> </ul> | <p>Rewarding and Developing Staff Strategy</p> <p>Research and Innovation Strategy<br/>Enterprise Strategy</p> <p>Creative Industries Strategy</p> <p>Professional Academic Practice Framework</p> <p>Staff Development Policy</p> <p>Professional Development Planning</p> <p>University Professional Development Framework and Staff Development Activities</p> |
| <p>3 Community Engagement and Partnership Development (Section 2c refers)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i Widening participation and progression partnerships with schools, colleges and other education providers</li> <li>ii Community liaison with minority ethnic and social class target groups</li> <li>iii Professional relationships with practitioners and employers</li> </ul>   | <p>Rewarding and Developing Staff Strategy</p> <p>Professional Academic Practice Framework</p> <p>Enterprise Strategy</p> <p>Learning and Teaching Strategy</p> <p>Widening Participation/Outreach Strategy</p>   |

|  |      |  |  |
|--|------|--|--|
|  | iv   | Local authority and public sector engagement   | Creative Industries Strategy   |
|  | v    | Cultural and artistic involvement  | International Strategy   |
|  | vi   | Action research, consultancy and knowledge transfer  | Staff Development Policy   |
|  | vii  | Regional and sectoral engagement in relevant areas   | Professional Development Planning<br>University Professional Development Framework<br>and Staff Development Activities |
|  | viii | Support for students working in practice and in voluntary activity   |  |
|  | ix   | Involvement in electronic networks linking the University to other organisations                               |  |
|  | x    | Collaborative course delivery/involvement in educational consortia and partnerships/lifelong learning networks |  |

Note: The precise contribution of an individual member of staff across all or some of the three dimensions to be determined by normal appointment, contractual and professional development planning processes

## **b) The role of other professional staff in supporting learning and academic practice**

- i) The University emphasises as its core activity the provision of higher quality learning, teaching, research and knowledge exchange supported by excellent academic practice. Its primary identity is as an educational community offering academic services to individuals, employers, professional bodies, communities and specific sectors. It stands or falls on its educational and academic reputation which in turn determines its corporate business standing and performance.
- ii) From this standpoint it is legitimate to say that every other professional service - administrative, technical, financial, welfare, learning resources, facilities, human resources, estates - has a primary responsibility to support the dimensions of academic practice defined in this paper. While being concerned to identify and promote the particular professional expertise of all our professional services and to define, maintain and enhance the professional standards of their staff, the University should also expect to define, maintain and enhance their contribution to academic practice. Although some services may be 'closer' to the academic experience than others it is important to note that there are key contributions of professional expertise which can be made by professional services across all the three dimensions of academic practice defined in this paper. A schematic outline is offered below:

### **1 Learning, Teaching and Curriculum Development**

### **Professional Support Service Contributions**

Student Support and Guidance (General and To Specific Groups)

Learning Resource Provision and Guidance including Technical Support

Study Skills and Learning to Learn Support

Fit for Purpose and Appropriately Equipped Learning Accommodation

Staff Development and Enhancement

Student Financial Guidance and Support

Recruitment, Admission, Tracking and Monitoring of Students

Careers Guidance and Alumni Relations

Financial Systems In Support of Departmental and Subject Resourcing

General and Specialist IT Support  
Academic Standards and Quality Assurance  
Procedures

Publicity, Information and Communication

## **2 Enterprise, Research and Knowledge Exchange**

### **Professional Support Service Contributions**

Financial, Costing and Pricing Guidance

Intellectual Property Guidance

Project Management Support

Bidding and Contract Negotiation Advice

Research Staff and Research Student Support

Specialist Learning Resources and IT Support

External Representation, Networking, Publicity, Customer Relations

Staff Development

Fit for Purpose and Appropriate Accommodation

Publicity, Information and Communication

Student Enterprise and Employability

## **3 Community Engagement and Partnership Development**

### **Professional Support Service Contributions**

External Representation, Networking, Publicity and Customer Relations

Outreach and Liaison Activities

Cultural and Artistic Events Organisation

Support for Student Volunteer and Work Experience Activities

Employability Initiatives

Publicity and External Communications

Staff Development

Project Management Support

Financial, Costing and Pricing Advice and  
Guidance

Bidding and Contract Negotiation Advice

## **Appendix: University Policies and Procedures Influencing Academic Practice**

Academic Handbook: Quality Assurance Procedures; Academic Regulations  
Staff Development Policy  
Staff Handbook  
Learning and Teaching Policy  
Research and Innovation Strategy  
Enterprise Strategy  
Widening Participation Strategy  
Strategic Plan