Towards a Framework of Professional Teaching Standards

A response to the consultative document “Towards a Framework for Professional Teaching Standards”

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Introduction

The publication of the consultative document “Towards a framework for Professional Teaching Standards” issued by the seven leading agencies for considering teaching in Higher education in the UK is a significant development. It promotes a debate about the nature of teaching, the nature of professionalism, and the nature of the professionalism in teaching in higher education. It especially provokes the question as to whether there is something that can be referred to as “Professional Teaching”? If there is, it inevitably it poses the question about the nature of that professional teaching… and of professional learning… and of professional education.

This paper, and Part One in particular, will raise the wider issues of what we mean by standards and quality. It will look at issues of how we can use systems of quality assurance to move beyond compliance and prescription. It looks at how a Framework for Professional Teaching can assist and support the effective teacher, and act as scaffolding for improving the quality of teaching, and considers the importance being professionally responsible rather than only professionally accountable. This sees the opportunity of developing a framework as a positive contribution to educational transformation, and not to matters of compliance. Part Two then considers the implications of this view of a framework to the questions asked in the Consultation Paper.

This Paper is in two parts:

The first part raises and highlights some of the wider issues which are relevant to considering standards for teaching as a professional activity in a university or higher education;

the second part is largely concerned with offering answers to the specific questions which are posed in the Consultation Paper “Towards a framework for Professional Teaching Standards”.

TOWARDS A FRAMEWORK OF PROFESSIONAL TEACHING STANDARDS
Definitions… or not?

In the consultation paper it suggests that, “Professionalism” is commonly understood as an individual’s adherence to a set of standards, code of conduct or collection of qualities that characterise accepted practice within a particular area of activity.” (para3) Perhaps this is where some very significant issues begin to arise. There are many groups of people who would conform to that definition or specification, but in common parlance would not be described as “professional”. It may be invidious to select individual groups, but often people who would be normally described as “tradesmen” could be equally described in those terms, but would not be thought of as “professional”. Of course, in practice it is extraordinarily difficult to offer an all-encompassing definition for professionalism, but we might all recognise a profession when we see one. Do we really need a definition, and to make these distinctions? There are those who might argue that this is a rather irrelevant discussion, and yet there are clear issues about how university teaching has to be identified as an important and essential contribution to the life of a university, and indeed to society more generally.

Teaching standards beyond the curriculum

It would be inappropriate to limit concepts of standards to relate only to “the professions” and to some traditional activities within fields such as medicine, law, teaching, social work, etc. There are emerging professions such as in marketing, the media and communication, in environmental development, in human resource management, in tourism and hospitality, and so on. The list might indeed seem endless, and the question arises as to whether there is a real need to provide a definition of professionalism… and is this the same as professional practice?

It seems clear that professions do have qualities that can be recognised. One definition of a profession might be that it is a group of people entrusted by the public to work with dangerous modalities in the common good. This raises some interesting and unusual features of a profession. In what ways is a teacher “working with dangerous modalities”?… If a teacher is concerned with the sensitive and even contentious issues of values and ideals of students, what could be more dangerous in the hands of people who have ulterior motives than working with truth,
with positive social values, and with the thoughts of future leaders in society?

The key question need not be about whether teaching in a university is professional or not, but whether we ought to apply some kinds of standards to its impact and place in university life. Teaching, certainly including at university or higher education level, is a highly moral act. It has to be based on truth, it is concerned with the best that has been thought or written, and will pay attention to recent relevant research. At its best it has to be inspiring, creative and offer the student the motivation to develop her/his critical curiosity. These are some of the attributes of excellence in teaching. Can these be subject to statements of standards and targets? Is this the best way of developing these qualities? There is no question that we live in an age and a culture in which we need to demonstrate evidence of “quality”. The main question may however be about the nature of the evidence that we are to use to determine quality.

There is a danger that we are limited in our reference to different kinds of evidence. Evidence can be of different kinds, but too often the only kind that has an accepted legitimacy in the public domain is measured evidence. There is more to teaching than is readily susceptible to easy measurement.

This is not to suggest that standards are irrelevant, but standards alone can be the good that can become the enemy of the great. Those who teach in universities have a duty to encourage and enliven the learning of their students. This requires sensitivity to the needs of students, to the needs of the discipline, and to the requirements of programmes of study. Universities need great teachers, just as they need great researchers; great thinkers; and great people. Greatness does not come from the application of prescriptive outcomes, but from the inspiration that characterises relationships and motivation for learning in the service of thought.

As well as there being values specific to the teaching profession there are also values that are common across many or all professions. While these are not always articulated in the same ways they can be identified as underlying many of the codes of practice, memoranda of understanding, ethical codes, codes of professional behaviour etc which seek to guide and direct the activities of professions. It may be that the standards that are set for teaching have to be fully understood in a wider professional setting, that distinguishes the teacher as a professional person.

Teaching Standards... beyond compliance

Universities are not at their best when the have become places of compliance, conformity and adherence to regulation and edict. This is the antithesis of the open, creative and innovative environments that are the dream of the liberal educator and creative teacher. Do we see universities as places of conformity to prescribed standards and predictable approaches to learning? At their best they are places to encourage and promote thinking, of new ideas, and of change. They do not depend only on derivative thinking and only the thoughts that others have had. The teacher in the university is using learning to develop thought in the student. The objective is the autonomous, thoughtful and thinking student, and not some form of human encyclopaedia. There is an excitement in encouraging students to think thoughts that nobody else has ever had. Great teachers can strive to achieve this noble goal. Some will even reach that level of accomplishment. Professions in the modern world strive for excellence in the service of others, and the teaching that takes place in higher education has to reflect these ideals.
It is essential that the expression of standards does not become reduced to compliance with formulae and outcomes. If they become ossified as a set of bureaucratic statements they are corrosive of the real purposes of teaching. Indeed they can become threatening to those who are obliged to comply with them, and lead to practices that are restrictive and inappropriate. The statement of standards and ensuring that they are met can become a matter of imposed power, and can perceive “quality” in a very narrow kind of way. Quality in teaching is a long-term aspiration for preparing people to be people for others. It is a service that goes well beyond the classroom, and has its effectiveness in the improved quality of life for others. Care needs to be taken about short-term impact without longer-term benefits. There needs to be a kind of faith that good teaching will have longer-term benefits, and the continuing review by the effective teacher will be alert to this.

Within the professions there is an urge to create a culture of professional responsibility so that each profession can serve society through its distinctive skills and knowledge, and by the commitment of its members. This responsibility extends to the enhancement of teaching in higher education. This is not because of any kind of bureaucratic imperative, but because it is a noble and honourable aspect of professionalism to demonstrate the inspirational qualities of the teacher as a person who instils motivation, the ability to work with others, and a sense of purpose in academic life in the students that are being taught.

These represent additional, or even in some ways an alternative way of thinking about teaching from that implied by defining the qualities of teaching that are contained in the Consultation Paper: Educational quality is not just about doing things right – it is fundamentally about doing the right things.

A professional teacher in the modern world often has one foot in the street and one foot in the classroom or laboratory. This application to practice and to the lived experiences in the world of the student characterises professional teaching, and may be a distinguishing feature when compared to other “academic” activities of the university.

From accountability to responsibility

The latter years of the 20th Century have seen considerable interest in the public accountability of the professions and indeed during these years that accountability has often dominated the way in which the professions have been judged and how they have operated. The time seems right to incorporate this concern for accountability within a wider culture of professional responsibility – a culture that promotes the values, ideals and distinctive service of each profession. This is intrinsic to the profession itself.

This shift from accountability to responsibility is not to deny the significance of accountability. To be responsible is also to be accountable. Yet the professional teacher is not driven by an over-concern for achieving externally decreed standards. Rather the teacher is motivated by the urge to ensure that each student is a thoughtful, motivated, interested person capable of putting their learning and thinking in the service of others. There is a co-responsibility with other professionals and with others for ensuring that this learning is meaningful and “useful”.

One of the characteristics of professional responsibility is the personal commitment to enhance professional practice and an ongoing review and development of those practices. Professional bodies at least in part exist to ensure the maintenance of
standards within the professions and have helped articulate and, in many cases, codify the particular requirements of professions. This has normally taken account of the culture and heritage of the communities in which the profession is exercised and the knowledge and skills base for ensuring appropriate professional practice.

In its early work, The Higher Education Academy will be responsible for considering the frameworks and contexts for enhancing the culture for learning in higher education in the UK. Optimistically it might also be responsible for developing a culture of academic and professional responsibility that will offer a vision and a way of working that supports and develops universities in their contribution to a better society. This is not only a matter of expressing standards... part of the recent culture of higher education in the UK... but a matter of a vision which is inspirational and motivational. A difficulty with the expression of standards is that when it is imposed on the teachers it can drain the lifeblood from a professional person, rather than allows it to provide lifeblood for improvement. This represents a dilemma, but perhaps a dilemma based on time. Do the standards have to come first, and in the longer term there is a policy of philosophy that is more humane?

Is the key issue concerning standards for professional education essentially one of language? Standards can be understood to be largely about technical or technocratic issues. The primary vision of education is much more about humanity and a language and ideas that derive from philosophical thought and developing the common good. Perhaps we need a language that does not pose these as a duality of domains of thought, but sees the need for a unity that provides both a vision and a means of ensuring that vision is becoming a reality in practice. Without clarity about the purposes of teaching there is a real danger in being drawn into the debate about standards as a matter of technical specification with an absence of understanding of the real purposes of that teaching.

The emphasis for recognising teaching as a professionally significant activity is very important. In higher education there is a need to consider teaching as significant as research and consultancy and to ensure quality enhancement of teaching. The issues concerned with teaching are related to both the “content” of teaching that is, the curriculum, as well as to methods and approaches to teaching and learning. In considering the ways in which quality enhancement should take place attention should be given to four main areas that influence and effect learning. These are:

- The content and structure of the curriculum
- The motivation for and instilling the love of learning
- The relationships between learner and teacher
- The emotional and spiritual well-being of the student as a learner.

It may seem inappropriate to believe that university teaching has anything to do with some of these areas, especially the idea of dealing with the spiritual and emotional well-being of students. Yet in the area of school education there is an increased understanding of the centrality of these aspects of the learner in education. This is no less true for the learner at university, and this ought to be known and understood by those who see themselves as professional educators. In considering the quality of learning attention should be paid to these four main domains of professional and academic interest. To omit any of these is to omit a significant area for consideration in teaching and in learning. Effective teaching requires the learner to have challenging and attainable set, and the conditions established for their likely achievement.
It should be part of the teacher’s interests to ensure that students are engaged in more than learning of derivative ideas but are concerned also with original thought and with developing their own professional commitment and values. The purpose of education for a professional person is not the selfish acquisition of values but the learning that better serves society. Teaching is always orientated towards the future and is trying to develop a better society. It is also worth reflecting that the benefits of teaching are not only to be found in the immediate and in the practical. The effects are to be found in the longer term effects of preparing the student for life, and for instilling a care of others and a commitment to continuing learning and service to society.

Teaching is not only at the level of initial education, whether it is academic or professional but is essentially concerned continuing professional development. It is sensible and appropriate to ensure that a framework for teaching addresses both initial education and continuing professional development.

Within the past seven years the Quality Assurance Agency has spearheaded the publication of benchmarks for teaching. In the statements of benchmarks for the profession of teaching itself, there has been consideration given to three main areas. These are:

- Professional knowledge and understanding
- Professional skills and abilities
- Professional values and personal commitment

What is significant about these domains is that they interact with each other and that they therefore form a relationship among knowledge, skills and values. This interaction is what identifies the difference between an academic benchmark and a professional one. It will therefore be important in the future work. The Higher Education Academy that attention is given to this professional interaction when dealing with the nature of teaching in higher education.

Of course one of the potentially contentious and disputed areas would be in the field of “values”. In practice these values should be considered to be the values of the teacher as a professional person and therefore address the values which relate to:

- Valuing oneself as a teacher committed to personal learning and the learning of others.
- Committed to inspiring the learners and taking responsibility for their learning and thinking.
- Integrating into the content and methods of teaching aspects of the important human values of our time, such as social inclusion, developing hope, developing honesty and integrity in each person.
- The teacher therefore is engaged in a very important set of activities that are based on some moral and ethical imperatives.

Some Characteristics of Professions and Professional Practice

If we are not to define with precision the nature of a “profession” we might recognise them as having certain characteristics. Among the more important statements of the nature of a profession there may be included certain values which would include certain qualities which might help define the domains for which it would be appropriate to develop “standards”. Among these would be the following -

1. Teaching for “the Common Good”

This implies the preparedness of the professional to know, understand and serve “the common good”. Professions operate for the benefit of all members of society. This can be a subtle requirement on professions and may lead to dilemmas associated with “the good” in the short term versus the long term; or the good of individuals versus the good of society as a whole. The idea of “The Common Good” is itself, of
course a contested concept, but professions use it as a way of validating their activities without detailed explanation of the idea. Teachers in higher education would therefore be expected as professionals to work for the good of their students. They would be expected to work assiduously for their benefit, and in so doing transform society in ethical ways.

Teaching as a professional activity is there in a category similar to research and scholarly activity. It has to be undertaken with a commitment to excellence and a dedication to the formation and growth of students as well educated people. This raises the act of teaching from a means of transmitting knowledge and ideas to one of high ethical requirement and a strong social impact for the student.

There can be occasions when there is a real or apparent conflict between the common good and the good of the student. Students have to be assessed as people who will contribute to the common good, and they have to be judged accordingly when being considered for the award of degrees. Teaching in higher education might be expected to explain and exemplify professional ethical dilemmas. The teacher ought to have the experience, background and wisdom – the intellectual authority – to address these issues in the interests of students.

Of course, there can be occasions when professionals are also working “in the private good.” There is a client orientation that pays attention to services which are available for purchase by clients. Not all activities of the professional are therefore directed to the common good, and can be available as a private good. It is a characteristic of a professional teacher that (s)he will put the interests and needs of the students who are to be served before the servant herself/himself. Professional people will put the client before the professional self, and this is taken to be a hallmark of “professionalism.” So teaching takes on considerable attributes which are more than some notion of the teacher as a transmitter of knowledge and ideas, but a person of integrity, service and support to students.

2. Being honest in the interests of the individual

The ethical behaviour of a professional teacher will be to act with honesty and integrity in the interests of the individual student and society. One of the areas which causes difficulty for professions is the question of maintaining appropriate behaviour outwith the workplace. In a number of professions this is taken into account when the behaviour results in the profession being brought into disrepute. If teaching is to be considered a profession at university level this is a matter that ought to be considered. Of course many academics will see this a professional irrelevance, and would locate questions of this kind as part of personal behaviour and freedom from their academic life.

In certain other professions there is an expectation that the individual will normally act as a professional at all times. Practices in this regard vary from profession to profession and decisions about how a profession maintains its standards are subject to the regulatory bodies set up for that purpose. It is important in times of uncertainty for professionals to ensure that their practices are appropriate and that the professional protects himself/herself against accusations of professional malpractice, or inappropriate behaviour and action in promoting effective learning. If the “professional
standards” are to be applied it raises issues of this kind – matters not generally considered within the purview of “teaching standards”. It highlights the idea that teaching as an activity has to incorporate the planning, design, review and evaluation of teaching and learning. To treat teaching as if it only included some kind of transmission of knowledge and ideas is to take a very short-sighted view of the teaching process.

3. Professional ethical courage

Professional people always ought to act with integrity so that there is no question of the accuracy or truthfulness of their knowledge and understanding, and their probity of action in the professional domain. In addition working with professional ethical courage means recognising risks in adhering to certain professional values and being prepared to have the mental willingness to endure this.

Professional integrity implies having the professional ethical courage to say and do what is right in the interests of those whom professionals serve. This also implies working without prejudice and in a way that is impartial and respectful of rational evidence and cultural contexts.

In this regard teachers require to be aware of multi-cultural and multi-ethnic issues that relate to their students and the societies from which they come and the communities which they will serve. Ways of teaching, learning and assessing should recognise cultural differentiation and difference. These are not simply issues which require political correctness or some superficial kind of treatment, but rather matters of significance which deeply affect quality and achievement. There is a duty on the professional teacher to take account of the deep significance of these matters in the education of all students. Of course this also affects the ways in which staff and teachers from ethnic or cultural backgrounds must understand the cultural expectations of a university and the requirements of the students.

Stating professional standards for teaching should take account of the individual needs of students, including where there are particular educational needs including both gifts and impediments to learning and thinking. Some of these impediments might relate to health, physical and psychological needs. It is a matter of justice that each student gains the optimum support from the teacher once (s)he is admitted to a university. There is a duty of care for the student laid on the teacher. This is as true at university level as it is with teachers of younger age groups.

Professional people use their knowledge and skills in the interests of society and their clients. This is especially true for those who are entrusted to hold leadership positions within their profession. This should be respectful of professional associations and their ideals and values, taking account of the potential tensions between personal convictions and the views of professional associations and unions. These tensions can be exacerbated in inter-professional dialogue and working.

4. Having a Knowledge Base for Professional Action

It is the expectation of professionals that they will undertake professional action which is rooted in one or more conceptual frameworks which are recognised and understood by fellow professionals. Their actions are therefore based on principles and knowledge that is authenticated by professional peers. This base of knowledge is
respected and the professional person reflects on these frameworks to ensure that they are operating in the interests of their clients with the best information and best practices available to them. This acts as the rational basis for undertaking action and, where necessary, defending lines of action both within and beyond the profession.

The “professional knowledge” may be different from common knowledge and it is subject to change and development. Respecting new professional knowledge based on research and new insights is an important part of “professional intelligence”. This also takes account of professional knowledge and practices in the subject area. The methodologies relevant to specific subjects need to be fully understood and practised with expertise, relevance and balance. This includes the use of contemporary technologies to support and enhance teaching and learning by students.

5 Professional Evaluation, Reflection and Development

One of the other elements of professionalism is the importance of professional learning. A culture of professional responsibility requires professionals to maintain an interest in contemporary developments in their professional field and to undertake courses, programmes and activities that will enhance this. Any contemporary approach to specifying standards of teaching should recognise that this is not only about certain behaviour; but there is a process of continuing professional development and practice which requires to be in place to maintain the ongoing quality of the teacher. The professional is constantly encouraged to engage in self evaluation and subsequent relevant continuing personal and professional development to enhance her/his professional practices.

In a culture of professional responsibility this professional development will not only enhance the individual but will support him/her in developing as a member of a team. Collaborative working is of increasing importance in a culture of professional responsibility. This implies that continuing professional development is not only a matter of developing individual technical competence, but involves the motivation to work with others in the interests of wider society, often involving other professions through shared practice.

Normally professional people are also engaged in the introduction of new members to the profession and give support to those new members. It is common practice in initial professional development for this to include a significant exposure to and involvement in practical activities. (Sometimes these are simulated practices, especially where there is high risk involved, e.g. some medical practices). Often this support takes the form of supervision. This implies the evaluation of a new professional by an experienced professional.

6 Due confidentiality

Professional teachers will ensure that there is an appropriate form of confidentiality and sharing of information in all that they write, do and say. This is not an area subject to clear and unequivocal definition but will often be incorporated in a code of practice or memorandum of understanding that is developed by the profession itself for the information and interest of others. The particular ways in which the sharing of information and professional practices are undertaken needs to be explored with great sensitivity. In teaching this confidentiality is often associated with assessment and the preparation of final reports on students. It is always wise to have a code of conduct in an
institution that guides and directs issues of confidentiality. This is desirable not only from a legal stance, but in communicating to students what are the expectations as well as their responsibilities and rights. The extent to which there ought to be a “charter approach” to expressing the rights and obligations of students in relation to teaching is worth considering. Generally speaking one might see this as more a matter for the individual institution rather than some national specification. It is, however, an area in which some general advice of the desirability of good practice might be helpfully offered.

7 Relationship with the Client: Confidence and Trust

The main motivation for any professional activity resides in the common good or in the service to the public. In professional practice there is normally transparency of knowledge and activities. The relationship with the client is based on trust and confidence. This often requires confidentiality and a trusting relationship. There are occasions when professional confidentiality requires the withholding of information to certain people or groups but normally professionals operate with a degree of transparency in their actions. While it is normal for there to be a financial transaction this is never the primary purpose of professional activity. Decisions that are taken with a professional commitment in mind are not taken primarily because of financial considerations.

This concern for the student can sometimes result in conflict between the role of the teacher in helping a student, and the role of the teacher as an examiner. When the stakes are high, such as in final examinations, this dual role of teacher and examiner offers a classic case of potential role conflict. This is one reason for there being a need to state some general points of principle for the teacher to highlight and make clear the ethical position of the teacher, as well as looking at matters of technical competence in teaching to promote effective learning. This is an area that needs to be carefully considered on an ad hoc basis as far as teaching standards are concerned.
A: Are the principles set out in paragraph 11 appropriate and sufficient to enable the development of an effective professional standards framework?

The principles outlined in paragraph 11 are not sufficient and are only appropriate in a very limited way for developing a framework for university teaching. The specification would benefit both from being set in a relevant context of professionalism and from being broadened to take account of the importance of teaching as a force for motivation and inspiration. If the specification is based on the current model the result is in danger of seeing the university teacher as a technically competent person, based on a rather static model of the teacher, and not one invigorated by new thoughts and intellectual excitement and curiosity.

Regarding the context of teaching, it is important to recognise that professionalism will thrive in a climate of professional responsibility. This is where the teacher takes responsibility for the excellence of activity to promote effective learning and creative thinking. This requires attention being given to the planning of approaches, implementation of strategies, constant review and development of teaching, as well as the pedagogy being used to support the optimum learning needs of each student. Special attention should be given to the most able as well as to those who have impediments to learning. Paragraph 11 needs to highlight some of these key principles for learning, and to have university teachers pay attention to these critical issues that touch all levels of learning.

To be professional in terms of teaching is to pay attention to the needs of the student. The emotional and motivational aspects of teaching cannot be overstated, and this means getting beyond subject matter, knowledge and understanding. Of course serious issues are raised as to whether it is realistic to believe that all teachers in universities have to have the same level of expertise to undertake effective teaching. In an ideal world there should be aspirations to develop teams of teachers who would indeed have a high level of pedagogic competence. There is an important issue in promoting more team-based teaching, so that the student can access the expertise that ought to be available within the programme being undertaken.
In articulating this some attention should be given to the separation of ends and means. Teaching is a means of imparting ideas, understanding and principles; it is also a means of motivating learners to think and to be emotionally engaged in their studies. Regarding the purposes of education and particularly teaching there should be attention given to teaching which

- **Inspires effective learning**
- **Promotes critical curiosity and thought**
- **Develops resilient lifelong learners**
- **Encourages reflection**
- **Promotes creativity and inventiveness**.

In contemporary university education these are central to the concerns of the effective and caring teacher. Teaching is not merely a way of “covering the curriculum” – for “coverage” can be the enemy of thought- but a way of encouraging new thinking and the critical curiosity which has to be intrinsic to the effective learner.

There is a need to promote a “values-orientated” model of the university teacher as opposed to a “systems-driven” model. This will include a concern for the emotional aspects of educational and personal development. This implies that the professional education of university teachers should focus on matters such as:

- Having a philosophic approach to education rather than a systems driven approach.
- Developing the confidence in articulating this philosophy
- Having the skills of communication to inspire learners
- Managing to implement that for which the teacher and other professionals in the field are to be held accountable.

University teachers increasingly will have to be educated to deal with sophisticated matters of policy analysis. This is not an area in which there was great expertise at present, but attention will require to be given to this in a period of greater accountability.

It seems clear that in any specification of these qualities there is a need to have a sufficiently elastic use of language which does not become a straightjacket, but nor is so elastic that it fails to communicate real meaning and intent.

There is an importance in measuring outcomes and standards. Yet this is not the whole of education. There is a need to articulate an adequate, normative statement about the expectations of the processes of teaching and to see this as one means of guiding the work of the professional person. This promotes some highly desirable qualities of cognitive development, but there is also a need to see education as being involved with skills and values. The ways in which evidence of effective teaching is gathered lies at the heart of a quality framework. The importance of discerned evidence is vital to the successful establishment of a quality framework for teaching.

**B: We recommend that the Higher Education Academy be invited to undertake the development work on a professional standards framework.**

**How might The Higher Education Academy best work with institutions and other stakeholders in order to develop standards that would be of most benefit to the sector?**

One of the ways in which The Higher Education Academy might develop its work is to use existing frameworks for teacher professional development. For example the framework that has been developed for Teacher Education in Scotland is based on a model which is proving to be resilient and robust. It does not depend on a prescriptive model, but rather on setting out domains of professional requirements which,
when interacting, provides teaching of quality. This allows flexibility and takes account of variations of context, of subject matter, and of the needs of students. It is faithful to the principles of effective practices in terms of learning and teaching, and focuses on the needs of the student. Quality, generally speaking, is built on continuity and it would be wise to begin with a model of this kind, and to discuss with professional educators, those in universities and academic stakeholders how this framework can be developed.

One of the elements of learning as a professional is to develop thinking that derives from practice. There can be a tendency to consider only the reverse direction of promoting theoretical perspectives and seeing practice derive from theory. Critical to this consideration is the triangular relationship in which the debate is not just about theory and practice but centrally involves professional values. The consultation paper recognises the significance of professional values and ethical issues. This is warmly welcomed, and should act as a sound basis for expressing the benchmarks or standards for teaching.

The benchmarks for teacher education provide a helpful starting point for a framework, although the different context of higher education will require adjustments, perhaps both in structure and certainly in detail. One other issue which will be raised by the potential application of such a framework is the extent to which professional education for university staff is to be mandatory for each person in a teaching role. It is recommended that there is a "threshold standard" requiring each person with a teaching responsibility to undertake a programme of this kind. This might require a brief (e.g., one term) programme involving principles and practice, but the norm for permanent teachers is a more demanding programme over a period of one session, with regular CPD requirements throughout one’s career. This threshold standard ought to be concerned with a philosophical understanding of the significance of teaching and be orientated in the direction indicated in the comments to Question A.

C: The model of a possible standards framework, set out in paragraphs 16-21, covers inclusion of threshold standards with links to expectations for continuing professional development (CPD), including specialist areas, and support for recognition and reward of successful teaching. We welcome comment on the range of staff and levels of activity proposed in the framework.

A standards framework in a modern profession will require teachers to undertake CPD. The overarching framework should incorporate the main domains at each level in the professional development of the teacher. So the idea of having domains such as
Professional and Academic Knowledge and Understanding
Professional and Academic Skills and Abilities, and Professional Values and Personal Commitment

would be the outline of a helpful framework for the professional standards for teachers in university. These domains will interact in any act of teaching, and with experience the ways of interacting will become more integrated and more complete. This progression will be represented in the developing framework for CPD. This is represented diagrammatically in Appendix 1 on page 20.

One of the key requirements for professional teaching is the need to ensure that there is partnership with academic colleagues and other relevant groups such as research groups as well as academic and professional associations. It is essential that within universities there is recognition in teaching of the significance of relevant research, not seeing scholarship and scholarly activities as activities remote from teaching.

These partnerships also have to be confident and inspired by a concern for ethical professional development. It is essentially through such relationships that the quality of teaching is supported. Teaching always has to be tested against matters of balance, relevance, coherence and progression, and these are often judged in the wider academic communities, as well as in the university itself.

Part of this professional development will be at the initial stages of professional activity. Attention has also to be given to periods such as the induction phase and for the continuing professional development of those who have a responsibility to serve society.

The issue of “rewards” is perhaps not a helpful one in this context, and this issue should be clearly separated from the consideration of establishing a professional framework for teaching standards. Excellence in teaching is intrinsically a meritorious activity, and should not require extrinsic rewards to ensure its excellence. Universities should be encouraged to see excellence in teaching as being taken into account for promotion and career advancement in the university. Rewards for good performance might well be established, but it is not thought appropriate to see this as having a significant place in establishing a national standard for teaching.

D: We outline an approach to accreditation of institutional courses based on a framework of professional standards, with links to appropriate professional qualifications, which is developed from the accreditation arrangements of the ILTHE. We welcome comments on this approach.

It is entirely appropriate for institutions to be encouraged to develop their own systems to educate university teachers. This has to get beyond the laudable work of many centres for effective teaching and learning, and to recognise the deep professional activities which are embedded in professional teaching. This also requires attention to curriculum design and development as we all as to classroom/studio/laboratory practices. A national accreditation system is entirely sensible, allowing mobility among institutions, and an acknowledgement of professional standards having some currency across the universities.
Effective professional learning may rely on a high quality of civic engagement and academic and professional interaction with professional bodies. This will impact on the quality of learning that takes place. Good structures are a necessary but not sufficient requirement for effective partnerships to develop. Partnerships inevitably rely on people, and good partnerships rely on good people. The effectiveness of these processes should be part of the accreditation system.

The Higher Education Academy will have to align academic awards and professional awards. This also requires a framework to be established. The recognition of teaching standards at

- "Threshold Level",
- "Lecturer Level", and
- "Chartered Lecturer Level",

may be a suitably simple basis on which to begin. In time a greater degree of sophistication may be helpful, but a graded system of a simple kind would be useful at the beginning. These are indicated in Appendix I (p27), showing how they may relate to increased competence in teaching. This increase in competence is not only a matter of experience, but of effectiveness across different kinds of teaching in higher education.

One of the issues that this will raise is whether teaching at post-doctoral level is similar or sufficiently different from undergraduate teaching. The central issue is probably the range of contexts and styles of teaching in which the teacher can prove to be effective.

E: How might a framework of standards and expectations for continuing professional development be used to support and promote teaching quality whilst minimising burden on individuals and institutions? How could the benefits best be demonstrated to prospective students and other stakeholders?

It would be a failure of a system of professional framework if it were to become a bureaucratic system of accountability and compliance. A framework should be a scaffolding for development in teaching and not a cage. It is therefore important that the framework is used for activities such as self-evaluation and for promoting new and innovative ways of teaching and learning. The capacity to undertake a relevant approach to self-evaluation is itself one of the hallmarks of effective teaching. This is not to determine the nature or style of self-evaluation, but rather to suggest that gathering evidence of quality, performance and "standards" is itself a mark of quality. It would allow groups such as external examiners to reflect on matters of quality in teaching, and would offer a structure within which discussion of teaching quality can be helpfully conducted. It is important to use the framework for self-evaluation and for promoting new and innovative ways of teaching and learning. This is one of the hallmarks of effective teaching – the capacity to undertake a relevant approach to self-evaluation. This is not to determine the nature or style of self-evaluation, but rather to suggest that gathering evidence of quality, performance and "standards" is itself a mark of quality.
The Higher Education Academy would ensure that in specialist areas, and especially areas of education of other professions there has to develop confident partnerships with agencies such as: Professional bodies, Universities, Funding councils, Practitioners as represented by their professional councils, and other bodies. There is also a need to take account of other groups such as unions, professional organisations and others in whose interest it is to ensure high quality professional people are being admitted to and coming from programmes in universities.

Each of these stakeholders has a legitimate professional part to play in the professional work of teachers in universities. There has to be community of interest which champions the drive towards quality in teaching, not because it is politically sound to do so, but because it is an intrinsically important part of the role of a university in society. This teaching will be a collaborative venture with university staff and others in the field, and the quality of this needs to be kept under review.

Professional teachers at university level will need to be aware of approaches for promoting effective learning such as “service learning”; problem-based learning and other strategies for teaching and learning. This often requires a partnership with professions and with businesses, enterprises, companies and so on. This focus on strategic awareness of the range of kinds of learning is a vital part of what it is to be a professional teacher. Without strategic awareness of teaching principles and methods there is a danger of designing programmes which do not prepare students who are resilient learners, robust thinkers, and creative professionals. A common conceptualisation of leadership in society is that professional people will be “servant leaders” for others. They are people for others and will act accordingly. This is perhaps more of a model of leadership itself, but it has implications for how leaders will act in certain circumstances.

F: We welcome any further comments on all aspects of this consultation, in particular on our understanding of professionalism and our suggested definitions of professional standards.

There is a need to develop professional learning which takes account of learning in different settings. These settings should include the wide range of vocations and environments in which the profession activity is to be undertaken. One of the issues affecting teaching and learning is the location in which that learning takes place. Learning should not be constrained by the institutional context of a university but needs to reflect the places in which the learning will be put to use. In particular professional learning has to take account of relevance of context. There might therefore be some thought given to this in expressing standards and qualities of teaching. Part of the quality of teaching relates to the quality of the location where teaching takes place, including its relevance and the capacity to motivate professional learning.

Attention has to be given to overseas qualifications and awards both in academic and professional domains. This requires attention to the portability of awards and not only to systems of credit transfer. This is an area in which some work has already been undertaken, and The Academy will be able to build on the ideas which are in the public domain. In particular the idea of trusting certain other systems of education to educate their teachers is an important idea, and this kind of international portability should be carefully examined. Certainly the arrival of standards should not inhibit the most able teachers from working in UK universities.
Conclusion

The values which guide and inspire professional people and organisations ought to be publicised. The nature of a professional person is someone who is respected by the public to work with their skills, knowledge and insights in the common good. How this is undertaken is dependent on the culture, communities and local contexts, but the underlying values are always of primary importance. The university teacher is a person to whom these important considerations apply with a special force and significance. One of the latent issues associated with these thoughts is the fact that students must be served by their teachers, and in their turn students must serve others too. These are the people who, in their time will make their own history. Inevitably they will, and in so doing they will establish their identity, their place in history, and put their imprint on the future.
References and Further Reading

Hord, S.M. Professional Learning Communities: Communities of Continuous Inquiry and Improvement. (www.sedl.org/pubs/change34/)
Scottish Executive Education Benchmarks for Initial Teacher Education in Scotland. Department, GTCS, HMSO, 2000

Appendix 1: Model for CPD and Standards