

The USW Academic

Executive summary

The USW Academic model sets out a vision for what the characteristics of a USW Academic will demonstrate and to provide a means for achieving that position. USW continues to recognise the equivalence of high-level practice and activity to traditional formal academic activity, and recognises such high-level practice within both the scholarship and research job families, although needs to 'capture' these nuances more. The USW Academic will enable us to capture the range of activities of academics, to understand and celebrate the value of their contribution and to identify those academics with significant responsibility for research. This will enable us to move forward taking account of the outcomes of the Stern Review, changes to the REF and allow us to proactively face the challenges that will confront USW over the next decade as the environment in which we operate changes. For example, we need to prepare for the impact of the creation of a single funding body for post-compulsory education in Wales.

'Research' in the context of the USW academic, includes activity that could be submitted for REF, but also other forms of research activity and knowledge transfer. Staff will be aware of the Education Cognate Group and the proto Unit of Assessment in Education, a pan-USW research group, where pedagogic research is discussed and facilitated. Reviewing how a particular subject area is taught, systematically, and planning a new intervention and then evaluating it, is valued research activity. This activity could be undertaken during the 12.5% research/scholastic activity time, or staff can be supported to develop research bids.

At the first appraisal discussion following adoption of the USW Academic it is proposed that a matching process to the three job families be undertaken (Teaching and Scholarship; Teaching and Research; and Research) which will serve as a vehicle for bringing clarity of purpose and improving the quality of the appraisal discussions, as well as a second audit (following the 1st mock REF in 2017/18) for the purposes of the actual REF submission. Staff may seek to move job family, which may enable a re-clarification of each role (family) and impact work practices/management of human and estate resources, which would form part of the DPR discussion and objective setting. This proposal also seeks to reconceptualise the 12.5% allocation to scholastic activity/research time into formally agreed/negotiated objectives that forms part of the appraisal and is signed off by the line manager. This would enable richer discussions at DPR, where 'inputs' i.e. planned activity, can be agreed and recorded (via the Academic CV) and progress monitored, recognising that we live in a dynamic environment where business need can change quickly.

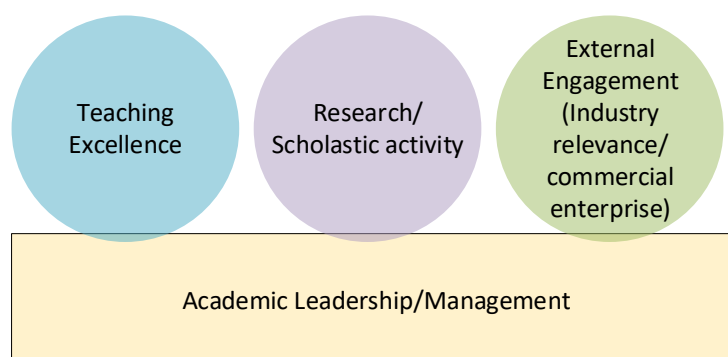
Introduction

USW has a diverse academic profile, largely vocational in nature, delivered by a mixture of academics, technical demonstrators and hourly paid/guest lecturers. The USW mission is to be the 'University of choice in Wales and beyond for students, organisations and communities who value vocationally-focused education and applied research which provide solutions to problems that affect society and the economy'. The value of excellence in pedagogy and equivalence of high-value practice outputs should not be underestimated as these attract high quality staff, students and business relationships.

In USW, there are three job families of academic role profile, Teaching and Scholarship; Teaching and Research; and Research. As progress is made towards the implementation of the USW Academic concept, line managers will need to discuss with each academic colleague which job family is the best fit for their role, taking account of their current remit, skill set and business need. Colleagues can use these discussions to develop their careers/career aspirations insofar as they meet current and anticipated business need.

Irrespective of the academic role profile, four key themes of skills/expertise (albeit with different foci) emerge, and these are broadly in Teaching excellence, Research/scholastic activity/external engagement/profile. These all rely on competency in academic leadership/management, which encompasses the management of business relationships, personal coaching/tutoring, research administration and/or staff/budget management (refer to figure 1).

Figure 1. Core functions/duties of the USW academic



Recent discussions in the VCEB sub-groups have included a review of teaching workload allocation for readers and professors. Although there is still an imperative to meet business need, an agreement of remission (0.3 FTE pro rata for Professors and 0.2 FTE pro rata for Readers) from teaching activity has been reached. The 'liberation' of time provides an opportunity to reconceptualise both what our expectations of academics are and also whether academic staff wish to move onto different job families that are more in tune with their career aspirations.

The national academic contract identifies a maximum of 550 hours of formal scheduled teaching (FST) per year per academic. Our expectation is that academics are loaded with no more than 500 FST at the start of an academic year such that there is room for projects/new initiatives, etc. as the year unfolds. This should mean that alternative activities, such as

commercial income generation, contemporary practice, scholastic activity or research activity are achievable, although need to be negotiated and managed via the appraisal process.

Acknowledging that the DPR system is evolving it would seem that systematically matching staff to the above characteristics and 'capturing' their current contributions might be an opportunity to enable articulation of career opportunities and 'bring to life' the core values of the USW academic. Although the Pure scholastic activity repository does enable capture of some activities, the 'standard' academic CV should enable a more comprehensive view to be taken and understood by all.

In short, the aim of this initiative is to get improved clarity of purpose, to enable better quality discussions at appraisal, and to support and enable career development *at every academic level* across USW. Academics need such clarity of purpose and vision, and for these to be aligned to the strategies and outcomes of Schools/Faculties and their respective business needs, to feel their work is recognised and valued.

The model

Teaching

It would be reasonable to assume that teaching needs to be excellent (who would want to aspire to mediocrity?), rated as such by students, and assessed as excellent by peers. There are a range of measures that indicate effectiveness and excellence in teaching, and no single measure is used. Module feedback; student voice nominations, external examiner feedback, NSS results, and subset information such as teaching effectiveness, assessment and feedback quality, and/or overall NSS score, can all be used as indicators. The Standard Academic CV can record the ranges of indicators listed above, along with free text comments, and serve to provide objective evidence of meeting objectives, etc. Academic teaching staff would be FHEA as a minimum, although it would be reasonable to expect Senior Fellow/Principal Fellow in more senior academic positions or where there are leadership roles in pedagogy. Recognition of excellence in teaching would be via Associate Professorships (in learning and teaching), and therefore the role descriptors in the HAA guidance notes have been amended and provide clarity of expectation for promotion. Appointing Associate Professors/Professors serves as recognition of the importance that USW places on effective pedagogy. It would be desirable going forward if academic staff would consider developing their ability to teach across all subjects being taught within their discipline at levels 3 to 6; and have a specialism at level 7. In this context discipline is defined as an academic discipline which relates to an individual's qualifications, experience and agreed role profile. Where development is identified by a member of staff to achieve this aim, the member of staff will discuss their requirements, including reasonable time and support, as part of the DPR discussion. Where a member of staff has identified such development requirements, they will not be expected to deliver on this aim unless the University has provided the identified time and support.

Research (scholastic activity and/or professional practice)

Academic staff should be engaged in research and scholastic activity in their academic discipline, and that discipline could be, for example, the teaching of that body of knowledge that makes up the degree, or in other words, excellence in pedagogy/andragogy or other

forms of equivalence. Academics on a teaching and scholarship or teaching and research or research contract should have the *potential* for REF submission, although the expectation would be that every member of academic staff in the Research job family would be potentially REF submissible. The Frequently Asked Questions sheet that accompanies this document provides further explanatory notes, but in the context of the National Contract, 'scholarly activities' includes the production of books, contributions to books, articles and conference papers, and is to be construed in the light of the common understanding of the phrase in higher education. It is recognised that 'scholarly activities' cover a range of different inputs and outputs, and these need to be discussed with the relevant line manager who understands the academic disciplinary background of the member of staff. Where this includes research, additional training for appraisers will be provided via the new Head of Research roles that have recently been introduced to USW, and will be accompanied by ongoing managerial development courses and opportunities.

This proposal also seeks to reconceptualise the 12.5% allocation to scholastic activity/research time that is articulated in the National Contract into formally agreed/negotiated objectives that form part of the DPR discussion and is signed off by the line manager. (The USW Academic Workload Model provides further clarification and guidance as to what constitutes 'scholarly activity').

External (engagement, business engagement, etc.)

Recognising that a guiding principle is agreed targeted external engagement that adds and shares value, some academic staff will be able to utilise their skills by providing expertise, services, consultancy, etc. to businesses (SME, National businesses, etc.), although this could include specialist advice/practice. These will be dependent on the school or faculty strategic plans and the business needs of each unit or group.

Academic Leadership/Management

Course leadership (or the ability to be able to course lead) is expected (or should be expected) at all levels of qualified academic (i.e. those who have completed a teaching programme); support of students (at all academic levels) is designed to support student progression, identify where students may require additional support, limit attrition, and meet the requirements of the personal academic coaching/tutorial support principles. Academics need to be able to 'know their business by the numbers' so that suitable resource decisions can be made. Leadership/management activity is common to all academics, whether this is classroom management, self-management of activities, or management of research teams/students or research/commercial activity and is therefore an activity that all academics need to either have or develop some expertise in.

Building a culture supportive of development and performance

Depending on discipline, it can take up to 10 years to 'grow' an academic (3 years undergraduate study; 2 years post-graduate/MSc study; 3-5 years for a PhD or equivalent; and 1 year teaching course) plus any 'practical' industry experience. In some cases, the 'growth' rate is nearer to 15+ years as the discipline requires higher-level experience. University academics are therefore academically well-qualified but also potentially very experienced staff (within their industry). Continuing to recognise and value high-level

practice outputs remains critically important for USW and the suggested standard CV should enable appropriate capture and value to be collected and recognised during the appraisal.

Summary

The lead in to the next REF provides an opportunity to confirm with staff which job family is more suitable to their career aspirations and skill set, although all staff should be 'active' within their discipline and contribute to their respective body of knowledge, whether through contemporary practice, research, pedagogic excellence or scholastic activity. The key areas of activity form the template for reviewing where the majority of activity is undertaken (the Standard Academic CV), and will enable staff and managers to audit current activity with a view to adjusting expectations and inputs/outputs within the current job families. It is recognised that the first time that the CV is completed, there will be a time 'cost', although once completed, updating the CV becomes relatively simple. The intention will also be to explore whether data can be exported, for example onto our website, so that the excellent work and talent that is evident in the staff can be recognised. Mobility between job families remains fluid, albeit within the expectations of each role.