

Going Global Partnerships Programme

Higher Education Policy Dialogue

A Professional Standards Framework for
Teaching and Supporting Learning in Jordan's
Higher Education on Advance HE Fellowships

British Council Jordan

1st December 2021

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Table of Acronyms

PSF	Professional Standards Framework
HE	Higher Education
UKPSF	United Kingdom's Professional Standards Framework
FHEA	Fellow of the Higher Education Academy
MBSC	Prince Mohammed Bin Salman College
UK	United Kingdom
CPD	Career Professional Development
MoHESR	Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research.
UoB	University of Bahrain
UTEL	Unit for Teaching Excellence and Leadership
AQACHEI	Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission for Higher Education Institutions
JNQF	Jordan National Qualifications Framework.
HEI	Higher Education Institutions

Overview

The pace of change in higher education (HE) owing to the recent pandemic, the discovery and application of new technologies, globalisation and rapid social transformation has exemplified the need to further enhance the skills and competencies of teaching in HE. In the recent past the complexity of an academic's role was attributed to the often-conflicting demands of teaching, research, and institutional engagement. Currently however this complexity has been amplified by the pace of change, as the very nature of teaching, research and institutional engagement are being reimaged. Benchmarking professional standards for teaching and establishing the skills and competencies required for one's development as an effective HE teacher is therefore of critical importance.

In alignment with the educational goals of the British Council Jordan, the purpose of this HE Policy Dialogue was to provide a platform where such benchmarking is enriched through collaboration and partnerships between universities and other educational institutions in Jordan and the UK. The key objective was to encourage fruitful dialogue on sharing best practices in their common effort to advance a HE community that has the professional capacity, resilience, and confidence to continuously improve itself.

The Policy Dialogue, was targeted to HE leaders and policy makers in Jordan and was attended by over 50 delegates. The core of this policy dialogue was the UK's Professional Standards Framework for teaching and supporting learning in HE (UKPSF).

As outlined by Advance HE "The PSF identifies components of successful teaching and learning. These are expressed in the Dimensions of Professional Practice. The PSF clearly outlines the Dimensions of Professional Practice with HE teaching and learning support as:

- Areas of activity undertaken by teachers and those who support learning
- Core knowledge needed to carry out those activities at the appropriate level
- Professional values that individuals performing these activities should exemplify.

The PSF also describes four categories of Fellowship that can be achieved by staff working in different roles in higher education."

Distinguished speakers in the policy dialogue provided an inside view of Advance HE fellowships and the UKPSF and reflected on their impact for teachers in HE, institutions, and national educational systems. They referred to the current approach in Jordan and regional practices and participated in a roundtable to discuss how the development and implementation of such a fellowships scheme and framework can be supported in Jordan.

Speakers and panel members included:

- HE Professor (Dr.) Mamoun M. Al-Debi'e, Secretary General, Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research.
- Professor (Dr) Azmi Mahafzah, Chairman, The Committee of Licensing Academic Work Practice
- Mr Ian Hall, Director of International Partnerships, Advance HE, UK
- Dr Diana Al Jahromi, Director of the Unit for Teaching Excellence and Leadership, Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (FHEA), University of Bahrain
- Mrs May Abuhamdia, Deputy Director, British Council, Jordan
- Mr Summer Xia, Director, British Council, Jordan
- Professor (Dr) Nikolaos Tzokas, (facilitator), MBSC.

Key Issues Presented/Discussed in the Event

Professor (Dr) Azmi Mahafzah, Chairman of **The Academic Practice Committee**, outlined the Academic Practice Bylaws Issued by a royal decree based on “Article 35- E of the Law of Jordan Universities for the Year 2018”. The provision of the code of these bylaws apply to teaching and research staff as well as full time lecturers planning to work in universities and university colleges in Jordan. The criteria and conditions for awarding the license to work as faculty in Jordan’s universities and university colleges have been developed to safeguard the teaching skills and competencies of the profession and assure the quality of teaching and scholarship.

Mr Ian Hall, Director of International Partnerships, **Advance HE**, UK, introduced Advance HE and provided a very detailed review of the **Professional Standards Framework (PSF)** for Teaching and supporting Learning, the **Fellowship scheme reflecting the PSF** and associated impact.

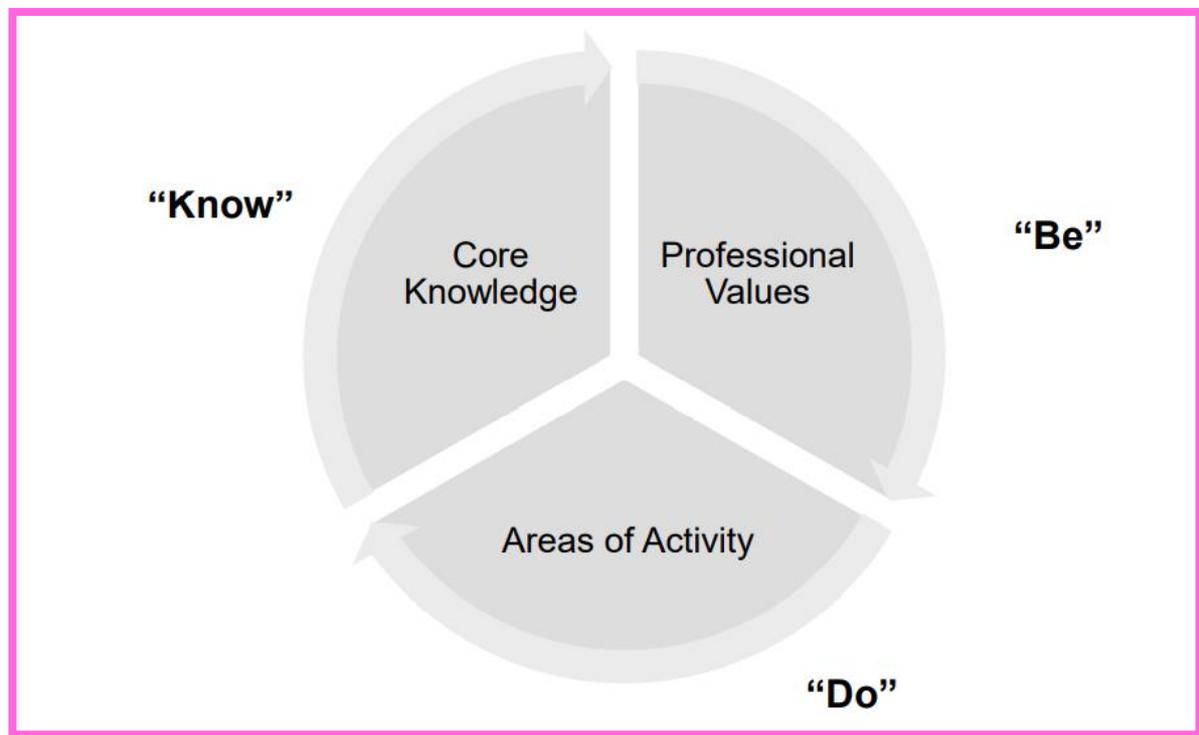
Ian called for everyone’s opinion as to whether excellent teachers are born or made. Almost everyone agreed that:

*“Excellent teachers are made, not born; they become excellent through investment in their teaching abilities”
(European Science Foundation, 2012, p.vii)*

The case for attention to excellent teaching was reinforced by reference to the following extract:

*“Teaching should be further professionalized as a collaborative endeavour where teachers are recognized for their work as knowledge producers and key figures in educational and social transformation”
(UNESCO, 2021)*

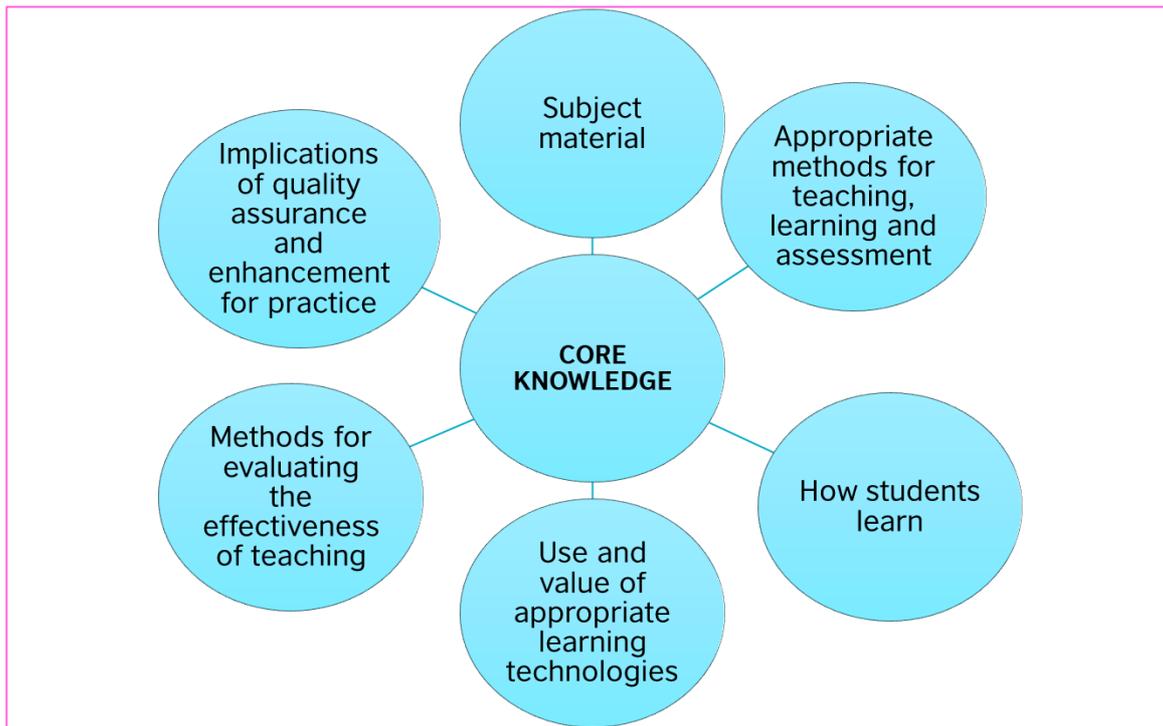
The Professional Standards Framework (PSF) and its dimensions



Areas of activities

- Design and plan learning activities and programmes of study
- Develop effective learning environments and approaches to student support and guidance
- Teach and/or support learning
- Assess and give feedback to learners
- Engage in Continuing Professional Development, incorporating, research, scholarship & the evaluation of professional practice.

Core Knowledge



Professional Values

- Respect for individual learners and diverse learning communities
- Promote participation in HE and equality of opportunity for learners
- Use evidence-informed approaches & outcomes from research, scholarship & CPD
- Acknowledge the wider context in which HE operates, recognising the implications for professional practice.

Advance HE Fellowship Scheme Categories

Associate Fellow (D1)	Associate Fellow (D2)	Senior Fellow (D3)	Principal Fellow (D4)
For those who are new to teaching, or <i>support</i> teaching and learning (e.g. librarians, lab technicians, learning technologists)	For those that have a substantial teaching role within Higher Education (e.g. lecturer)	For those with Leadership, Management, Mentoring or coordination responsibility for of Teaching and Learning (e.g. Academic Developers, Programme Leaders, Deans)	For those with national or international experience of Strategic Leadership of Learning and Teaching in Higher Education
The individual's personal practice activity <i>2 areas of activity</i>	The individual's personal practice activity <i>All dimensions of practice</i>	The development, mentoring, influence & impact of & on others in learning & teaching <i>All dimensions of practice thoroughly demonstrated & use of this expertise to improve the practice of others / programmes.</i>	The demonstrable impact in learning and teaching activity by influencing policy and strategy. <i>A strategic leader of learning & teaching with impact across / beyond an institution.</i>

Dr Diana Al Jahromi, Director of the Unit for Teaching Excellence and Leadership, Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (FHEA), **University of Bahrain**, presented the UoB Teaching Excellence and Leadership unit, which has the **mission** to “develop the teaching and leadership skills for all faculty members involved in the teaching process at the UoB, local and regional universities to keep up with the evolving requirements in the HE sector. To assist academics to continuously develop their teaching skills and to integrate pedagogic - research in their teaching practice”.

The UTEL in collaboration with Advance HE developed a considerable number of programmes to advance teaching excellence and leadership in line with the above mentioned PSF and Fellowship Scheme.

Dr Diana outlined the key role played by a supportive senior management at the UoB and the benefits from a **country-level/country-wide teaching excellence mindset**.

Obstacles to the application of the scheme and solutions:

Limited time concerns; academics were released from extra admin activities to join the Fellowship.

Personal value concerns; academics participating in the programme received extra points in their annual evaluation and completion contributed towards their promotion objectives.

Language obstacles; the programme was translated and delivered in Arabic for non-English speaking faculty.

Impact concerns; students' teaching satisfaction views were collected for faculty undertaking the program and the positive testimonials received were disseminated widely.

Along the same lines, overcoming obstacles through a **system thinking approach** was raised by Mrs May Abuhamdia, Deputy Director, **British Council**, Jordan:

“Enabling experience sharing and dialogue on how to move from policy to practice is a key issue for us. Our work is about systems strengthening, how we identify what good will look like and how internationally this will be recognized. Supporting a higher level of understanding of what a good qualification will look like for academics in Jordan is necessary for continuously improving Jordan’s HE system.”

Key Recommendations

Mr Summer Xia, Director, **British Council**, Jordan, provided an outstanding summary of the event and its key conclusions as follows:

“Six critical elements emerged from the dialogue today, we need to appreciate these and work towards their implementation:

1. Higher Education teaching and learning is linked to the critical outcome of skilled graduates who need to be fit for the Labour market today. While measuring that is not always straightforward, ensuring that academics have the capability, tools, and confidence to continuously improve is key for HE institutions to promote the quality and relevance of their graduates’ outcome.
2. Jordan is on a strong trajectory by having the Bylaws and a Ministerial Committee to operationalise this and also by having the support, passion, and energy from the HE sector in Jordan as it was witnessed today from everyone who has participated in the event.
3. We need to strengthen the link between CPD and the quality of teaching and learning and bring significant recognition and validation of this through schemes such as the Professional Standards Framework and Fellowships.
4. We must recognise the need to have incentives for academics such as promotion, a community of practice, a club, an appreciation letter from the President. This is key to the effective implementation of what we have discussed today because CPD requires time and effort, and academics need to be motivated.
5. CPD in teaching in HEI can be benchmarked against CPD in other countries and also locally in some other professions where the professional is both a practitioner and an educator here in Jordan, such as physicians and healthcare providers in Medical Faculties. Learning from international experience and also Jordan’s own experience in other professions can be a very good starting point for a multidimensional CPD framework nationwide, locally adapted.
6. Consultation, engagement, and feedback is core to the operationalization of any Professional Standards Framework. We must work on creating that culture of teaching quality assurance. In that regard, we can replicate this successful experience in Jordan where a Bylaw has materialised and resulted in an actionable framework. And that is what the British Council has achieved together with the Ministry of Higher Education and AQACHEI through the JNQF. We

can draw experience from that by looking at international best practice, contextualisation, action planning, and implementation.

And finally, we must continue to exchange knowledge and share experience on what works both internally and externally, exactly what we have done today through this Policy Dialogue”

Next Steps

The British Council is committed to working with partners in Jordan and the UK to support Jordan in its trajectory for a strong and highly competitive HE sector internationally.

In the short term, the British Council will focus on driving forward the following activities:

1. Dissemination of this policy dialogue

- Share report with all key stakeholders and participants.
- Provide access to slides and video of the presentations.

2. Action planning

- Continue supporting the Jordan’s Ministry of Higher Education & Scientific Research efforts and the work of the Academic Practice Committee.
- Continue facilitating closer collaboration among UK and Jordanian universities and with the Advance HE in the areas of the PSF and Fellowships

3. Community of best practice

- Facilitate the creation of a community of best practice in Jordan on PSF/ Fellowships supported by the Advance HE.

Event Materials

Policy Dialogue Agenda and Speakers Bios

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1AzykunXCvXsTjEbUN7jhMf7fVljv7aFx/view?usp=sharing>

Presentations

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1vyQ3Sgb5YqN72OtY4FeDCDryajz_i84t?usp=sharing

Testimonial

“We are grateful to the British Council for arranging today's event, and for always been a reliable partner and supporter of Jordanian education. Learning from best practices in teaching and learning is at the top of our scale of priorities, because of its critical importance for our higher education sector, for the purpose of preparing qualified faculty members, equipped with the knowledge and skills to deliver a high-quality learning experience for our students.”

HE Professor (Dr.) Mamoun M. Al-Debi'e, Secretary General, Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research

