

Skills recognition in higher education



Steve Bowman BA (Hons) MA MSc FCLIP SFHEA (s.bowman@chi.ac.uk) is Deputy Librarian, University of Chichester.

Steve Bowman shares his experience of being a Higher Education Academy Fellow, arguing that while our professionalism is demonstrated through CILIP professional registration, the attainment of an HEA Fellowship can also help to signal wider recognition of our skills within higher education.

JO Johnson, Minister of State for Universities and Science recently indicated a change in government thinking about the balance between teaching and research in Higher Education. Whilst the government's focus for the last couple of decades has been on research as the main output of universities, this new focus would put teaching on an equal footing.

In Jo Johnson's announcement 'Teaching at the heart of the system',¹ he stated that: 'Above all, to meet students' high expectations of their university years and to deliver the skills our economy needs, we need a renewed focus on teaching.' This change of emphasis was accompanied by the announcement of a Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) which would seek to:

- ensure all students receive an excellent teaching experience that encourages original thinking, drives up engagement and prepares them for the world of work
- build a culture where teaching has equal status with research, with great teachers enjoying the same professional recognition and opportunities for career and pay progression as great researchers
- stimulate a diverse HE market and provide students with the information they need to judge teaching quality – in the same way they can already compare a faculty's research rating
- recognise those institutions that do the most to welcome students from a range of backgrounds and support their progression to further study or a graduate job.

So where do we fit into this?

As information specialists, we have a central part to play in supporting students in their learning, and staff in their teaching. I believe that the introduction of the TEF will enable professional services staff in HE to improve their profile within the sector.

Whilst the TEF does not state any definitive structure or process, it would seem sensible to make use of existing frameworks and processes to enable the provision of an 'excellent student experience'. There is already a body within the UK which has this goal at its

core, the Higher Education Academy (HEA).² The HEA 'is the national body for enhancing learning and teaching in higher education (HE). We are committed to excellent learning and teaching, supporting UK HE organisations with an emphasis on improving the student experience.' It would be curious indeed if the HEA were not to be central to any teaching excellence programme that may be brought forward in the future.

The HEA has produced the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF)³ which in many ways echoes CILIP's Professional Knowledge and Skills Base (PKSB).⁴ Through an accreditation programme, professional services staff in HE (librarians, library assistants, student support staff, IT staff) can attain accreditation for their skills in supporting teaching and learning. The HEA offers four categories of Fellowship. Your career stage and professional experience will determine your eligibility for the award of Associate Fellow (AFHEA), Fellow (FHEA), Senior Fellow (SFHEA) or Principal Fellow (PFHEA). Within the scheme, AFHEA could be attained by library assistants, whilst PFHEA would be aimed at heads of service.

So where do I fit into this?

As a professional librarian since 1992, I have been working in educational institutions for more than 20 years. I first became aware

HEA and CILIP

Over the last year, the HEA and CILIP have been working closely on a project to formally develop the links between CILIP Professional Registration and the Professional Knowledge and Skills Base (PKSB), and the HEA UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) and HEA Fellowship. The focus of this project will initially be to deliver joint promotional material to highlight the benefits of professional qualifications for both CILIP and HEA members and provide additional support to those members who are working towards their submission.



The HEA has produced the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) which in many ways echoes CILIP's Professional Knowledge and Skills Base (PKSB).

of the HEA about 12 years ago, when I was employed in a large FE college in Sussex, and as a visiting lecturer at the University of Brighton. I had been a member of the Library Association since 1988, and became an Associate in 1994. Following a move to Ravensbourne College of Art and Design in 2004, I joined a small group of academic colleagues in applying for 'Practitioner' status within the HEA. At that time (and even now) the HEA was perceived as a body 'for' academics, and I was the only 'professional services' staff member in this first cohort.

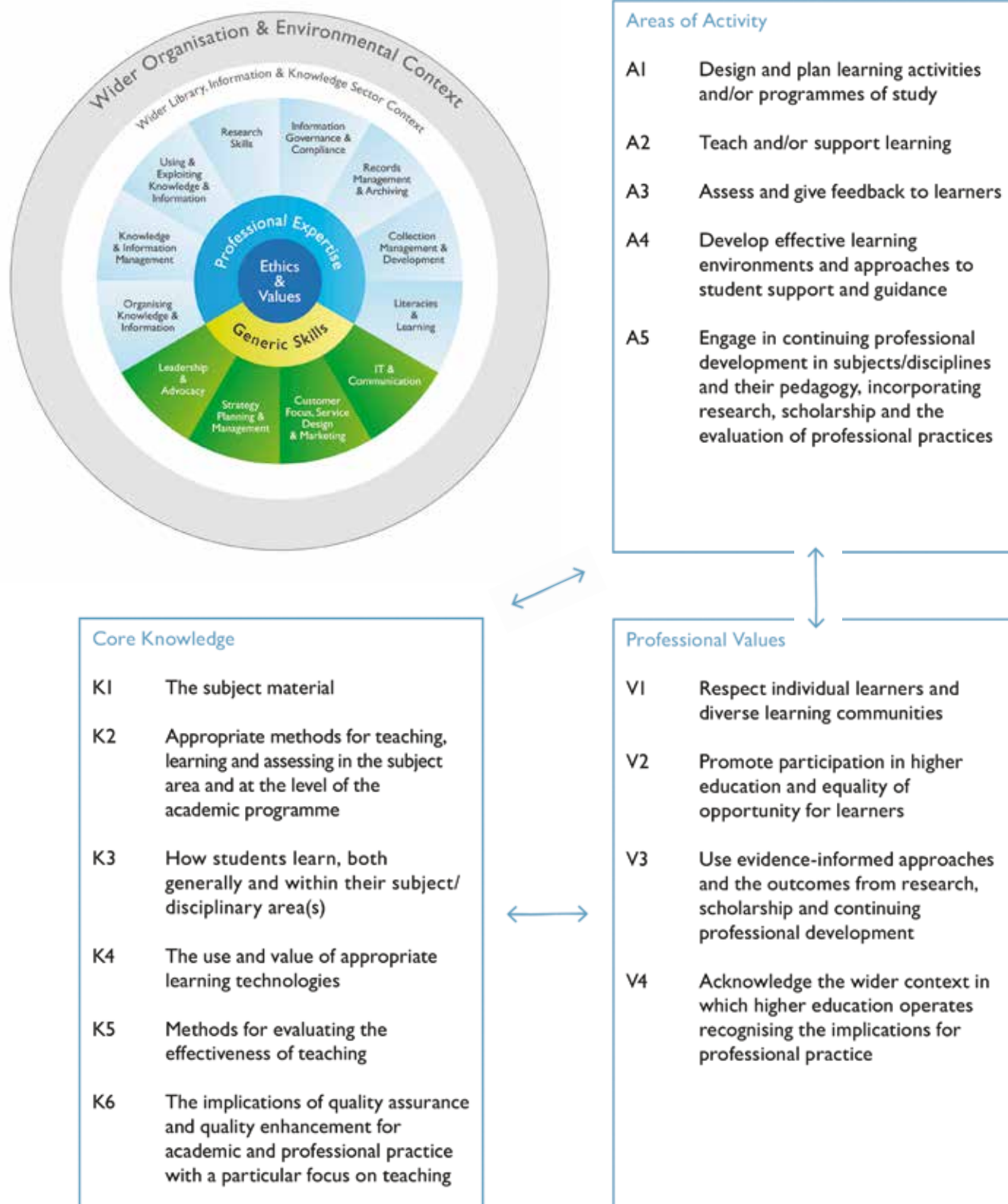
Along with this small group of academics, I was awarded 'Practitioner' status in 2004, which was converted to 'Fellow' later that year. Since that time, I have been working exclusively in HE institutions, and have valued my membership of the HEA. I always felt that (as with the now defunct HEA Subject Centres) there should have been a forum for 'Professional Services' staff on the HEA website, and in their practices. With this in mind I ran a series of conference talks and presentations throughout 2012-13 entitled 'Librarians Awake'⁵ in which I urged professional services

staff (and in particular librarians) to look beyond their libraries and institutions, and begin to see how they could receive the recognition that they deserve for their learning and teaching support role.

PKSB and UKPSF

In 2005 I became a Fellow of CILIP and began to expand my interest in the wider elements of learning and teaching, and the HE landscape. CILIP's PKSB brings the areas of professional and technical expertise together with the generic skills and capabilities required by

Comparison of CILIP's PKSB wheel (left) and the HEA's UKPSF (three boxes) shows that both CILIP and the HEA recognise that a reflective approach to professional development allows the practitioner to 'raise their game', professionally and educationally.



those in the library, information and knowledge management community, and it gave me the opportunity to look at my professional practice in an objective way. Comparison of the PKSB and the UKPSF shows that both CILIP and the HEA recognise that a reflective approach to professional development allows the practitioner to 'raise their game', professionally and educationally.

Learning and teaching

Since taking up post as Deputy Librarian at the University of Chichester in 2011, I have become increasingly involved in a learning and teaching role, both through supporting academic departments with resources and services, and through teaching and lecturing, both to staff and students at the university, and in the region, delivering modules within the Developing Digital Literacy course on e-copyright and the use of e-resources, and in 2014 constructing and facilitating a PGCert module on the pedagogy of e-learning.

It was during this period that the university sought accreditation from the HEA for its Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (PGCLTHE) provision, and was successful in doing so. This in turn led to a reinvigoration of the institution's drive towards full HEA Fellowship status for all academic staff, and a round of promotional materials were issued across the university community.

Having been one of the first cohort (back in 2005) to apply for, and be awarded Fellowship, I felt that this would provide an excellent opportunity to progress my professional accreditation through applying for Senior Fellow status. Along with a group of four academic colleagues, I undertook the portfolio route to application, and was successful in April 2015 in being awarded Senior Fellow accreditation. The portfolio route was particularly fruitful for me. It gave me the opportunity to step back from the day-to-day tasks of supporting learning and teaching within the university and look at how my professional development since becoming a Fellow had influenced my learning and teaching practice. The work that I undertook on the PGCLTHE was particularly important in that it was my first opportunity to put into practice the pedagogic underpinning that I had learned whilst undertaking my MSc in E-learning during 2007-10.

Promoting professionalism

In this increasingly competitive market, with pressure to explicitly recognise and promote the professionalism of staff and services, it is essential that all professional services staff are offered the chance to gain an HEA award, as well as CILIP recognition. I am pleased to say that two of my staff (both Subject Librarians) are in the application process for HEA Fellowship through the

university's Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (PGCLTHE) route.

In future I anticipate that professional services staff from IT and Support Services departments will also achieve accreditation through this means. Whilst our professionalism within the information specialist sector can be demonstrated through our CILIP professional registration programme, it may be that within higher education the attainment of an HEA Fellowship could signal a wider recognition of our skills.

In an increasingly professional marketplace, it is essential that staff across institutions, in both the academic and professional services roles, can engage with national bodies such as CILIP and the HEA in order to demonstrate that they have the knowledge and skills to operate in our modern educational environment.

The HEA is not just for our academic colleagues, we can all be a part of the drive towards standards and professionalism.

We do a great job, let's get the recognition that we deserve! And don't forget to revalidate! [7]

References

- 1 Jo Johnson MP and Dept for Business Innovation & Skills, 1 July 2015. <http://bit.ly/1gaGPjt>
- 2 Higher Education Academy www.heacademy.ac.uk/
- 3 UK Professional Standards Framework <http://bit.ly/1T3Zf2X>
- 4 CILIP's PKSB <http://bit.ly/1gkLUeW>
- 5 'Librarians awake!' <http://bit.ly/1QrDwEI>

247 lib.com

247lib.com

is complete robust web based library management software

Applied Network Solutions implements a Quality System, certified by QAS according to Standard ISO 9001:2008

"The library system for 24 hours 7 days a week reliability"

Developed and maintained in the UK by the top library software specialists.

Great support - Great people - Great software

English
 Spanish
 Français
 Deutsch
 Italiano
 Português
 العربية
 Türkçe

Suitable for :

- ✓ Charity, Special
- ✓ College, School
- ✓ Corporate, Law
- ✓ Government
- ✓ Health, Prison
- ✓ Public
- ✓ University
- ✓ Robust
- ✓ Engaging
- ✓ Easy to install
- ✓ Easy to use
- ✓ Easy to maintain
- ✓ Low cost
- ✓ Personalised

Accessibility:

- ✓ Any language
- ✓ Any time
- ✓ Any where
- ✓ Onsite or hosted
- ✓ Web configuration and set up cuts costs
- ✓ Self-Issue
- ✓ Z39.50 fully supported
- ✓ Support for Android and Google Book API

AMLIB UK Limited
The Innovation Centre, Norden House, Basing View, Basingstoke, Hants RG21 4HG

Tel: +44 (0) 1256 300 790
Email: info@amlib.co.uk - Website: <http://www.247lib.com>