Academic Development Reflection Tool

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Coventry University Group Education and Student Experience Strategy 2030

Coventry University Group's mission "***Creating Better Futures***" is underpinned by our 5 values: Collaboration, Determination, Diversity and Inclusion, Innovation, and Integrity. Our strategic theme of Education and Student Experience, underpinned by our mission, vision and values, aims to deliver an education that transforms lives and advances society by targeting six key priorities:

- Access, participation and inclusion
- Learning pathways and student engagement
- Curriculum framework
- Student experience and learning environment
- Employability, skills and employer engagement
- Future teaching and learning environment

Aligned with our values, mission and strategic key priorities in relation to Education and Student experience, the Academic Development Reflection Tool aims to provide a supporting developmental route for individuals that teach, support or lead teaching and learning within Coventry University Group to fulfil their potential and contribute to realising the Coventry University Group's mission.

Objectives of the academic development reflection tool

The Academic Development Reflection Tool supports the professional development planning for individuals and managers, by providing a means to map development pathways for staff dependent upon their roles and experience. As such the Academic Development Reflection tool can be used to inform development conversations and help capture and recognise the broad range of professional development opportunities that exist to support individuals' career development and the enhancement of the student learning experience.

By considering activities and mapping development opportunities to roles and experience, it will be possible to provide a means of building an individual academic development plan.

The academic development reflection tool can support:

- fostering a culture of supportive and ongoing academic professional development
- providing a structured framework for meeting the individual's and institutional needs for enhancement of academic practice
- allowing for a tailored approach to support an individual's developmental aspirations
- promoting reflective practice, self-managed development, collaborative spirit and successful dissemination of best practice
- providing the means for building and evidencing a portfolio of activities and outputs to support career development
- assuring and enhancing the quality of our students' experience and students' outcomes.
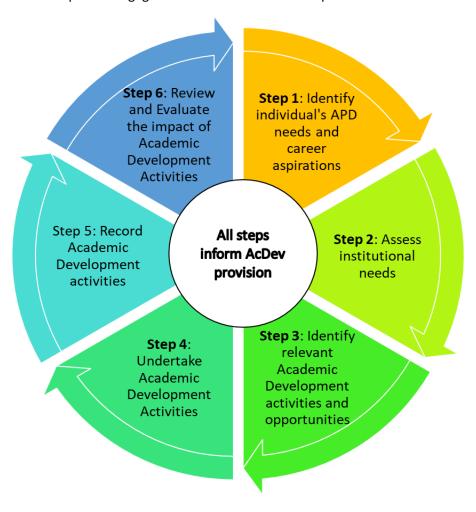
The Academic Development Cycle

Academic Development, similar to professional development, is an ongoing process that aims to enable continuous improvement and career development, with a focus on Academic Practice in order to enable individuals to fulfil their potential and achieve high standards of performance in their field as well as their academic practice.

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The Academic Development Cycle can be used to guide discussions between individuals and their employers to:

a. Identify the individual's and organisation's needs relevant to the individual's role and responsibilities
b. Identify relevant academic development opportunities, and
c. Record the impact of engagement with academic development activities

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Academic Development Themes

Colleagues join the Coventry University Group with a wide range of experiences and expertise. The Academic Development Reflection Tool allows colleagues to navigate academic development opportunities based on the needs of each individual and the requirements of their role. This tool therefore aims to support colleagues in developing expertise in six Academic Practice themes:

Theme 1: Inclusive Practice and Self- and Others' wellbeing

Inclusive teaching practices enable students, whatever their circumstances, to make the most of their learning experiences and have a sense of belonging. Staff that teach or support learning have a responsibility to ensure that their teaching practices are inclusive. Being an inclusive teacher might mean respecting the diverse student population, using strategies to enable and encourage the participation from all students, ensuring that all student learning needs are met, while removing barriers that may inhibit students' learning.

However, it is also important that staff who teach and/or support teaching are aware of how to ensure their own well-being and promote and support their students' wellbeing. This can be achieved by taking a pro-active rather than a reactive approach, while being aware and able to offer the right support to students and direct them to the right services and resources when the need arise.

Theme 2: Learning Design

Learning Design is mainly associated with the design of students' online academic journey, through learning activities in order to ensure that students have the opportunities to achieve the required learning outcomes. This theme is used more broadly to include all forms and modes of teaching and learning design, such as blended, face-to-face and hybrid. Staff that teach and/or support teaching may not always have the responsibility and/or opportunity to design the complete learning journey of students, however, it is essential that staff that teach and/or support learning are aware of the fundamental principles of effective learning design and how their role and responsibilities may have an impact on the wider student journey to ensure that students meet their learning outcomes.

Theme 3: Teaching Practice

High quality teaching practice is central for the student experience. Staff that teach and/or support teaching and learning will require to have an in-depth understanding of the wide range of different pedagogic theories that inform a wide range of practical teaching and learning strategies. This will enable them to identify the best teaching and learning methods for their context to support their students learning.

Theme 4: Assessment and Feedback Practices

Assessment and Feedback practices are highly interconnected, and assessment tasks should be designed by taking into account formative and summative feedback opportunities as well. To that end, staff that teach and/or support learning should be able to design a wide range of inclusive, authentic and relevant assessments that will support students learning and also help them to develop relevant graduate attributes. To support students' learning and offer learning opportunities that meet the students' needs, staff will require to also develop an understanding of how to enable dialogic feedback and embed it in their teaching practice. Staff that teach and/or support teaching should also be aware of the quality assurance procedures linked with assessment.

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Theme 5: Sharing Practice and Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

Teaching, Learning and Assessment practices should be scholarly- and evidence- informed. To that end, staff that teach and/or support teaching and learning would benefit by identifying ways to explore scholarly sources around pedagogic theories and learning strategies and evaluate their own practice by assessing the effectiveness of their teaching, learning and assessment approaches. Outcomes of those evaluations and experiences could then be shared in local, national or international ways, allowing staff to develop their own Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) profile.

Theme 6: Leadership and Management in Higher Education

Leadership and Management in Higher Education comes with a set of responsibilities that staff may not have directly been prepared as a result of their disciplinary and/or teaching expertise. To that end, staff that assume leadership roles within HE will require to develop additional skills and awareness of the intricacies of different roles such as course leadership, and module leadership, while managing and leading teams.

Academic Development Programme

Academic professional development encompasses a wide range of activities that can support academic practice. The Academic Development Team at Coventry University Group are offering an extensive Academic Development Programme available to all staff that teach, support or lead teaching and learning within Coventry University Group. Suggested development pathways are available for specific roles. Those signpost staff in specific roles to relevant academic development activities for various themes. They can be used as a starting point for discussions between individuals and line managers while exploring the Academic Development Cycle.

Examples of academic professional development activities include:

- workshops
- conferences (both online or face-to-face)
- accredited programmes such as the PGCAPHE
- professional recognition schemes, such as Fellowships of AdvanceHE
- online resources, that can be accessed independently or collaboratively, such as the teaching knowledge base
- participation in learning communities, and communities of practice.

Individual Academic Professional Development Plan

To best utilise the benefits of the Academic Development Reflection Tool, it is recommended that an Individual Academic Professional Development Plan (IAPDP) is devised within the first 3 months of employment, in order to set the goals and aims for the next 6-9 months. The IAPDP should be used to create an annual outline that will help the individual to achieve their long term goals by establishing target dates and identifying academic professional developmental opportunities relevant to their needs, aspirations and role requirements.

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The plan is presented in two steps, to include an individual personal assessment of the 6 key themes, followed by a dedicated plan based on the ongoing needs and aspirations of the individual and their manager's input.

In brief, the process for the development of the Individual Academic Professional Development Plan, is based on two steps:

Step 1: Individual reflections around the 6 themes, completed by the staff member and the line manager in relation to the individual's needs and aspiration, and the role's requirements and institutional priorities, respectively. These reflections do not need to be shared between the staff member and the managers but could be used to inform the discussion that takes place in Step 2.

Step 2: In collaboration with their line manager, the staff member will complete an individual Professional Development Plan that sets clear goals for the next 6-9 months addressing the most relevant Academic Development Themes. It is recommended that this discussion takes place during a meeting, rather than asynchronously, and takes into account the individual reflections completed in Step 1.

IAPDP: Step 1 - guidance for staff members

As a member of staff that teaches and/or supports teaching it is recommended that you regularly reflect on your experience, ongoing needs and aspirations around the 6 themes on your own.

Those are personal reflection and do not need to be shared with your line manager. So, you can be as honest as possible with your reflections.

This will help you to identify the areas that **you** would like to invest **your dedicated time** on for your professional development.

Learning is an ongoing process and there will always be opportunities to learn and develop new skills, even if you have been doing certain tasks or engaging with certain academic practice themes for a substantial amount of time. There may be areas that you may need to enhance further based on the current needs of your role, your career aspirations, changes in the organisation, or progress in the field of academic practice. To that end, be open and honest with completing this step. This will help you to reflect on your current practice, evaluate the impact of your previous professional development activities and identify the areas that you think you would like to prioritise to allow you to perform to the best of your abilities and offer the best experience to your students while supporting and leading (if relevant) your colleagues. Completing this step will help inform your discussions with your line manager in the second step of the process.

You can use the template provided to complete your reflections or create your own.

To aid your reflection think of the following questions:

- How confident do I feel in relation to the different academic development themes?

- What changes would I like to make in my practice?

- What does the evidence (e.g. student feedback, MEQs, NSS results, students' results) show in regards to my practice, and is there any space for further improvement?

- What are the goals of the courses that I am teaching on, e.g. reduce the attainment gap, increase first class degrees, reduce fail rate etc., and what can I do about it?

- What would I like to achieve in my career, and what do I need to get there?

- How has my engagement with APD (Academic Professional Development) activities changed my practice so far?

- How have any changes made as a result of APD to my own practice been perceived by my students and/or my peers?

- How has my students' performance been impacted by those changes?

Please note that you do not have to address all the 6 themes, if you don't think they are relevant to you and your current practice.

IAPDP: Step 1 – guidance for managers

As a manager you may have to balance a wide range of needs for your team as well as those of the individual team member. For that reason, we consider it essential that sufficient time is given to explore with each individual member of your team their career aspirations and their Academic Professional Development (APD) needs. This will enable them to perform to the best of their abilities but also to offer the best experiences to our students. At this stage we would like to ask you to consider any CQEM reports, or actions discussed at a course-wide level, as well as any strategic priorities for the Coventry University Group that you think could be relevant to the academic development of each individual member of your team. While completing this step and preparing for the next step you can ask yourself the following questions:

- How well does our course perform? What can the individual member do to enhance that?

- What are the University's strategic priorities at this point, and how can the individual member contribute to that?

- What objectives or performance indicators do we have to achieve as a team, and what training would be required for that?

You can use the template provided or create your own. *The notes and your reflection in this section do not need to be shared with the staff member*, however, they should be used to inform your discussion with the staff during the second step of the process.

It is important that these are used to support staff to understand their role in the success of the team and how that links with their academic development.

IAPDP: Step 2 – guidance for staff

In collaboration with your line manager, complete an individual Professional Development Plan, that sets clear goals for the next 6-9 months.

You can use the template provided, or create your own.

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If this is not the first time that the IAPDP is being completed, review the impact of your prior engagement with Academic Professional Development activities.

This is your opportunity to share the outcome of your reflections (Step 1) with your line manager, although you do not need to share the document. However, you could provide the reasons for any Academic Development activities that you would like to undertake that will allow you to perform to the best of your ability and develop your skills and knowledge in relation to any of the 6 thematic areas. You do not need to be considering all the 6 thematic areas at all reviews with your line manager, as some may not be relevant to your role or your needs at certain points of your employment.

Once goals are agreed, discuss **clear timelines** for achieving them.

IAPDP: Step 2 – guidance for managers

Support the individual member of staff, with completing their Individual Professional Development Plan.

You can use the template provided or create your own.

Discuss with them the current needs of the department and the team in order to meet key strategic priorities and team objectives.

Share your reflections from Step 1 with the member of staff and your thoughts of how they can contribute to those. Consider academic development training opportunities available through the [academic development programme](#) that may be beneficial for the individual.

Once goals are agreed, discuss **clear timelines** for achieving them.

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