HEA Fellowships: here's why they matter

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THE PROJECT

This project investigated the motivations, challenges and perceived impact from participation in the new Griffith Higher Education Academy (HEA) Fellowship Scheme – a scheme designed to encourage reflection on practice and provide recognition for effective teachers across the organisation.

The Griffith HEA Fellowship Scheme was introduced as a pilot in mid-2017, with small cohorts of staff being supported to write reflective portfolios of evidence. Participants in the scheme consisted of academics and professional staff from across Griffith in roles that support learning and teaching.

This project investigated the motivations and experiences of several cohorts who provided their insights at three stages during their application process.

HEA FELLOWSHIPS

Higher Education Academy (HEA) Fellowships, and the UK Professional Standards Framework (PSF), are being placed at the forefront of professional learning recognition in many Australian universities. The PSF is now globally recognised and provides a means to benchmark, develop, recognise and reward learning and roles in higher education.

HEA Fellowships recognise the importance and value of the PSF, with Fellowship categories aligned with the PSF Descriptors: Associate Fellow, Fellow, Senior Fellow, and Principal Fellow. HEA Fellowships also encourage professional learning.

There are now over 100,000 HEA Fellows globally, with more than 20 Australian Universities engaging with HEA Fellowships and embedding them into their internal staff professional learning and recognition schemes.

THE QUESTIONS

Stage 1 – examining the drivers....

What motivated you to participate in the HEA Fellowship Scheme?

Stage 2 – examining the process....

What challenges did you face?

What pathways or processes or models of support enabled you to engage successfully?

Stage 3 – examining the impact....

What has been the impact from engaging?

THE RESULTS

- Staff wanted to LEARN and be REFLECTIVE.
- RECOGNITION for learning & teaching was a motivator.
- Staff hoped to gain PROFESSIONAL LEARNING.
- SKILLS, NETWORKS and MENTORING were sought.

- FEEDBACK and MENTORING were vital for success.
- The greatest challenges were TIME and SELF-DOUBT.

- This Scheme… changed the way staff think about their practice, increased their confidence and provided evidence for career advancement.

RESEARCH METHODS

Stage 1 - pre-data

A workshop, sticky note, activity about GAINS and MOTIVATIONS.

Stage 2 - after submission

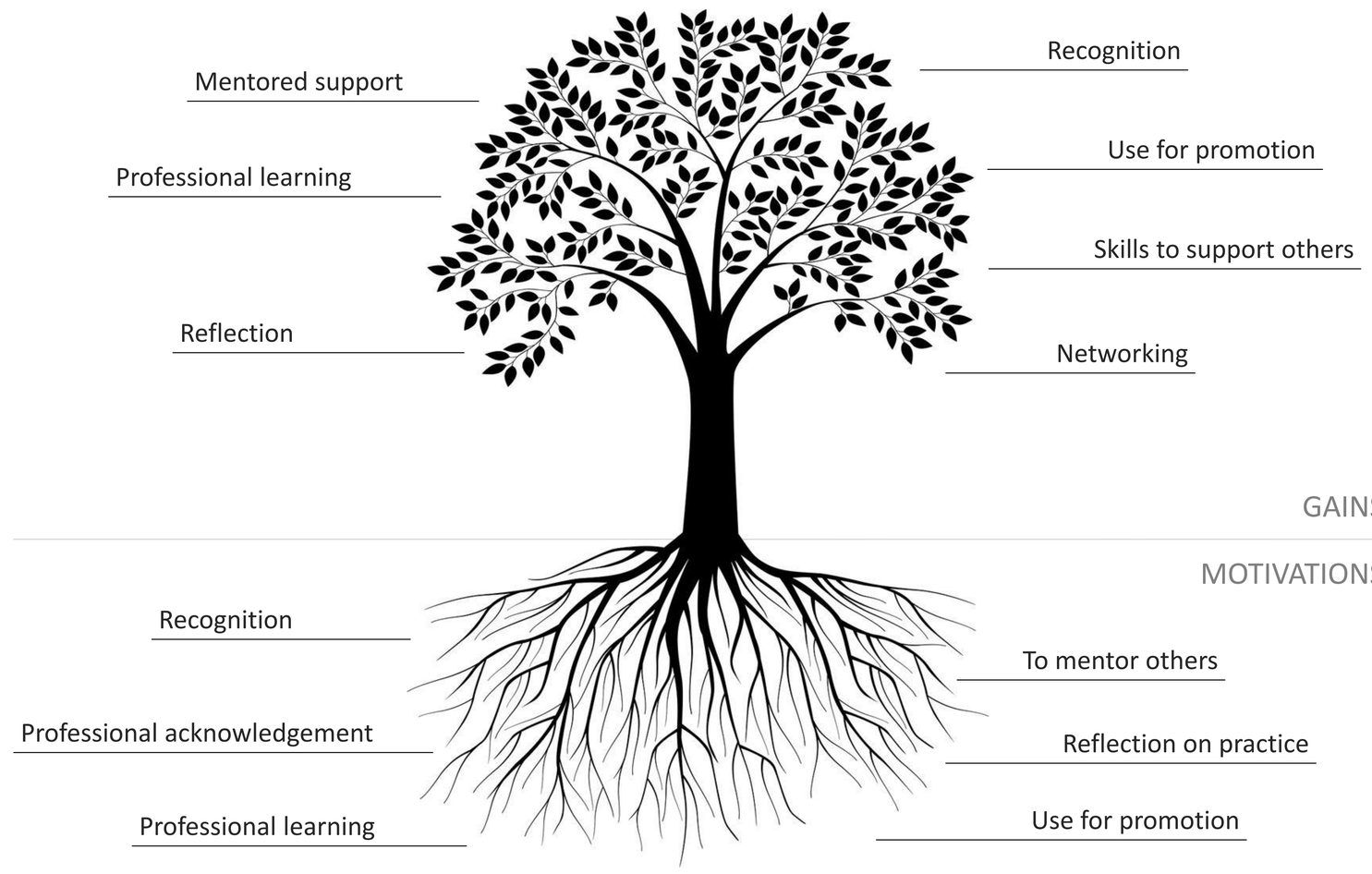
A survey encouraging reflection on SUPPORT and LEARNINGS.

Stage 3 – after recognition

A survey with five Likert scale questions, derived from a 2013 HEA Report, examined the IMPACT of the Scheme on individuals.

[Stage 1: n= 35; Stage 2: n= 10/17 (60% response); Stage 3: 12/25 (50% response)]

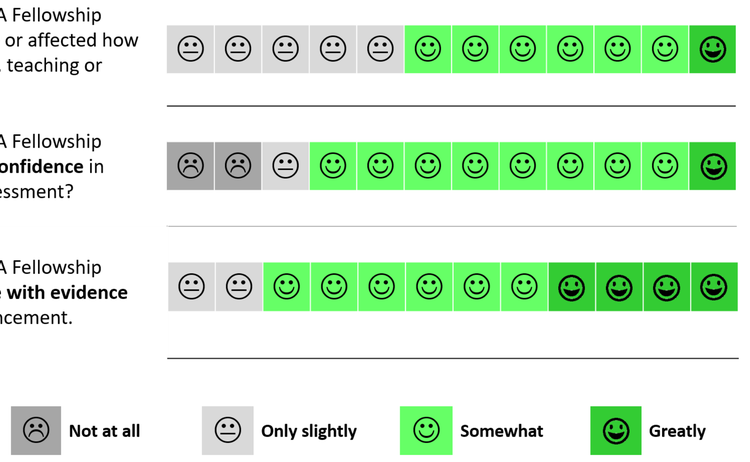
Stage 1 – the Drivers



Stage 2 – the Process

Additional information available here

Stage 3 – the Impact



DISCUSSION

Stage 1 responses showed a diversity of drivers underpinning participation. In Stage 2, 100% of staff cited individual feedback and mentoring as the most valuable forms of support - workshops, online resources and writing retreats were also acknowledged.

"Reflection" was cited as a driver, and the benefits from reflecting widely acknowledged, however, many found "reflective writing" a challenge. Whilst the Stage 3 numbers were small (n=12), it is interesting to see that staff are reporting a change in the way they are thinking about learning and teaching, and an increase in confidence. Staff also acknowledged that HEA recognition will be used as evidence for career advancement.

Overall, Griffith has integrated reward and recognition firmly within its learning and teaching landscape. HEA Fellowships are providing: professional learning opportunities; a valuable external accreditation; and increasing the emphasis on quality teaching and learning within the institution – **that's why Fellowships matter**.

"I realised that what I knew as normal work was actually having profound impact. It has changed how I view my work."

"I learnt mostly about myself and what motivates me to stay in academia despite the gruelling workloads."

"Its a validating experience - a quality assurance process for your own professional development."

"This experience has helped me to identify my strengths and areas for further development."

"This experience gave me confidence to move to my next milestone."

REFERENCES

Turner, N., Oliver, M. McKenna, C., Hughes, J., Smith, H., Deepwell, F. & Shrives, L. (2013) "Measuring the Impact of the UK Professional Standards Framework for Teaching and Supporting Learning (UKPSF)", Higher Education Academy Funded Project, retrieved from https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/measuring-impact-uk-professional-standards-framework-teaching-and-supporting-learning.

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