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.

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=36, Stage 2: n=10/17 (86% response); Stage 3: 12/25 (80% response)]

Stage 2 – the Process

Stage 1 response showed a diversity of drivers underlying participation. In Stage 2, 100% of staff cited individual feedback and mentoring as the most valuable forms of support. Workshops, online resources and writing mentors also acknowledged as “reflection” was cited as a driver, and the benefits from reflecting widely acknowledged, however, many found “reflective writing” a challenge. While the Stage 2 numbers were small (n=12), it is interesting to see that staff are seeking a change in the way they are thinking about learning and teaching, and an increase in confidence. Staff who acknowledged that HEA recognition will be used for evidence for career advancement.

Overview: 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 Fellowship matters.

Stage 3 – the Impact

Involvement with the HEA Fellowship scheme changed the way or affected how you think about learning, teaching or assessment?

Involvement with the HEA Fellowship scheme increased your confidence in learning, teaching or assessment?

Involvement with the HEA Fellowship Scheme has provided me with evidence I can use for career advancement.

DISCUSSION

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“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.”

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?

Stage 3 – examining the impact....
What has been the impact from engaging?

REFERENCES


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