



## Exemplars of Excellence in Student Education

**Note:** *Student Education* is used throughout this document as shorthand for *Contribution and Leadership toward Student Education and Support*.

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## 1 Introduction

The University has a clear, balanced Grade Profiles for academic staff that match individuals' activities and achievements to UoE grades 6-10, with respect to teaching, research and leadership/management. Reward processes have, historically, recognised contributions in these three areas. Exemplars of productive activity and excellent performance in research and leadership are well established and understood within their discipline-specific contexts and cultures. Concrete and unequivocally-evidenced exemplars of excellence in teaching have proved to be more elusive. While some outstanding promotions have been made for teaching-focussed activity, we have to date lacked an accepted set of flexible and dynamic exemplars to put flesh on the bones of the Grade Profiles with respect to student education.

A set of exemplars should not, by definition, be exhaustive. It will thus develop continuously as (a) experience of its use in our own reward processes improves its clarity and usefulness; (b) the nature of student learning *per se* evolves and (c) new exemplars emerge. In particular, it is likely that distinctive areas of the University (e.g. Edinburgh College of Art, Medicine) will define new and different exemplars of teaching excellence that are not in the mainstream University mind-set. This is to be welcomed and may, indeed, cause creative thought across the University. This 2013 document should not therefore be regarded as either a fully-formed, complete document or a one-off experiment. It is, rather, the first step in a process that will stimulate the growth of a more diverse set of exemplars of educational excellence drawn from future promotion/reward cases that have been inspired and informed by this initial list.

This document therefore provides **additional** guidance to users of the existing grade profiles, **supplementing** the [Teaching sections of 9.2/9.3 and 10.2/10.3 for grades 9 and 10 respectively](#). It also aims to assist both colleagues preparing a case for promotion/reward and those evaluating such cases as members of promotion panels. It provides concrete, illustrative examples of excellent performance in and contribution to student education that match the better-understood measures of research excellence. **The exemplars must not be regarded as a set of boxes to be ticked.** Rather they offer an insight into the nature, level and breadth of impact of the achievements and contributions, and the form of the evidence needed to support them, that can give substance to the generic activities that are in the grade profiles.

Rewards for excellence in student education must be equal in status, and most importantly **in value to the University, including its students**, to those for excellence in research. This document therefore proposes exemplary achievements in student education that are as challenging as those used in determining promotions and rewards for research. It thus provides a principled framework, clear exemplars and maximal evidence to inform the value judgements that are made by promotions and reward committees. These exemplars should help to set clear, challenging and valuable goals for colleagues whose primary focus, as agreed during Annual Review, is on student education. This will have a gradual and sustainable effect on the quality of student education and the esteem that is given to it. Nominations for promotion/reward are, however, based on at least two, if not all three of *Research, Student Education and Leadership & Management*. Applications for promotions must provide evidence of fulfilment of all required knowledge, skills and experience. This document will therefore inform **all** nominations and thus raise quality with respect to the student education dimension.

## 2 Background and Assumptions

- Existing Grade Profiles provide clear, balanced, but necessarily generic, descriptions of the nature of the activities in *teaching, research* and *leadership* that define an individual's level of contribution to the work of the University. They also provide generic measures of performance.

- Detailed criteria of excellence for research are well-understood and largely quantitative (e.g. publications, research income, research impact, effective knowledge transfer). The exemplars are quite different across diverse subject areas, but are well understood within the context of each subject and research discipline. Used holistically and flexibly, they reward a wide range of research excellence, in different subjects and contexts.
- Detailed criteria of excellence for research are well understood and are relatively ill-defined. Criteria from the research domain (particularly publications on pedagogy) have therefore been used routinely as surrogate measures of external evidence of teaching excellence. While pedagogical papers can be extremely important and influential, their exclusive use in this context **can result in targets whose outcomes do not necessarily benefit the University and its students.**
- Promotion to grade 9 or 10 is designed to recognise sustained past performance, but also comes with the clear expectation that promoted staff will continue to develop excellence and perform at, and, it is to be hoped, beyond that level.

### 3 Guiding Principles

- To reward excellence in student education that is evidenced by individual achievements that are of direct and measurable benefit to student education, particularly within the University.
- To maximise the level of external evidence in assessing performance.
- To present robust sources of internal evidence where external evidence is not feasible.
- To ensure that the achievements measured are of equivalent value and status, and are as challenging to attain, as those for research-focussed activity.
- To encourage candidates using this set of exemplars of achievement to present **multiple, but not necessarily all** of these exemplars of excellence, as do candidates for research-focussed reward/promotion<sup>1</sup>. Multiple, sustained achievements are, quite correctly, sought for research-related promotions and this principle must apply to all reward processes.
- To encourage the presentation of new examples of excellence that are of the same standard and integrity as those in this document.
- These exemplars are grouped for clarity. The groupings are not, however, mutually exclusive. For example, a valuable external activity that bestows esteem on the individual will reflect well on the University and is also likely to make a substantial direct or indirect contribution to the quality of student education.
- Internal evidence should be sought from the Head of School, Head of College or Vice Principal of Learning and Teaching, as appropriate to a particular exemplar of excellence. The evidence will therefore carry that authority. However, it is accepted that details of the evidence are likely to be sourced from, for example, the School's Director of Teaching<sup>2</sup>, a Dean or an Assistant Principal.

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<sup>1</sup> This principle is already embedded in the Grade Profiles as *"No job is expected to include all the activities listed; most will only include a subset."*

<sup>2</sup> Or equivalent – different titles are used across the University.

## 4 Exemplars of Excellence at Grade 9 - Senior Lecturer

### 4.1 Direct Contribution (“front of house” teaching/student support).

#### *With Internal Evidence*

<b>Activity, achievement</b>	<b>Evidence of Excellent Performance</b>	<b>Source of Evidence</b>
Edinburgh University Students’ Association (EUSA) Award Nomination for Excellence in Student Education and Support	Nominated in multiple consecutive years	EUSA, Head of School
Excellence in Student Support	Effective, sustained performance	Head of School
Favourable Student Feedback (within School, College)	Demonstrated, extended, excellence “in class” teaching, recognised by students and peers and evidenced in student feedback.	Collated student feedback and Head of School
Development, Delivery of Innovative Learning (including online learning and Massive Open On-line Courses (MOOCs)	Substantive, sustained contribution to an innovative course	Vice-Principal Learning and Teaching
Contribution to Teaching Programme Review (TPR)	Effective membership of multiple TPR panels and/or Convenorship of a TPR panel.	Vice-Principal Learning and Teaching
Leadership of new practice in student support	Implementation of significant new practice, e.g. developing Personal Tutor system for School	Head of School
Substantial contribution to a ‘step-change’ development in Learning and Teaching	Membership of Implementation Group at School, College, University level/successful secondment to Institute of Academic Development/Principal’s Teaching Award Scheme award holder.	Vice-Principal Learning and Teaching

### 4.2 Leadership in Student Education

#### *With External Evidence*

<b>Activity, achievement</b>	<b>Evidence of Excellent Performance</b>	<b>Source of Evidence</b>
Major contribution to Policy Development for University Education	Effective and sustained service on a Major External Committee (e.g. Government, Scottish Funding Council, Higher Education Funding Council for England, Higher Education Academy, Quality Assurance Agency, Learned Society)	External Committee Chair

***With Internal Evidence***

<b>Activity, achievement</b>	<b><i>Evidence of Excellent Performance</i></b>	<b>Source of Evidence</b>
Leadership within the University at School level (e.g. Course Organiser, Year Co-Ordinator)	Effective, sustained performance, causing positive, sustainable change	Head of School
Excellence in Developing Student Education at the University	Excellence as Head of Subject Area, Director of Teaching	Head of School

**4.3 Dissemination of Excellence in Student Education (i.e. Publication)**

***With External Evidence***

<b>Activity, achievement</b>	<b><i>Evidence of Excellent Performance</i></b>	<b>Source of Evidence</b>
Publications on Subject-Specific or General Pedagogy	Multiple Publications	Journal, Conference
Major invitations to speak on Pedagogy	Multiple invitations	Conference, inviting institution
Creation and maintenance of online materials for student education.	Peer-reviewable learning materials that are used beyond the University	External users of online learning materials.

***With Internal Evidence***

<b>Activity, achievement</b>	<b><i>Evidence of Excellent Performance</i></b>	<b>Source of Evidence</b>
Authorship of textbook	Adoption in a University course above and beyond the author's own teaching.	Head of School

**4.4 External Esteem and Recognition**

***With External Evidence***

<b>Activity, achievement</b>	<b><i>Evidence of Excellent Performance</i></b>	<b>Source of Evidence</b>
Appointment as External Examiner	Appointment in a leading University (Taught degrees)	External Appointer
Contribution to Review of Teaching in another University	Member of review panel external to University	External Appointer
Contribution to development of Quality Assurance in another University	Participation in Enhancement Led Institutional Review process at another institution	Quality Assurance Agency

Substantive Lecturing at another University	Sustained commitment – above and beyond a pooling relationship	External Appointer
Excellence in Internationalisation of Teaching	Sustained contribution to International Student Education.	Vice Principal Learning and Teaching
Higher Education Academy (HEA) recognition	Senior Fellow	HEA
Excellence in Knowledge Transfer	Sustained excellence in delivering external Continuous Professional Development (CPD) course material	External recipient of CPD
External Award for Teaching	Significant award (e.g. Exxon Mobil award in Engineering, Learned Society Awards)	External awarding agency

***With Internal Evidence***

<b>Activity, achievement</b>	<b>Evidence of Excellent Performance</b>	<b>Source of Evidence</b>
Commendation from External Examiners	Commended at least once at an Examination Board (identifiable by name or by course taught)	Head of School
Commendation from Teaching Programme Review or Professional Accreditation	Commended at least once (identifiable by name or by course taught)	Vice Principal Learning and Teaching

**5 Exemplars of Excellence at Grade 10 – Professor**

**5.1 Direct Contribution (“front of house” teaching/student support).**

***With External Evidence***

<b>Activity, achievement</b>	<b>Evidence of Excellent Performance</b>	<b>Source of Evidence</b>
Named commendation from Teaching Programme Review or Professional Accreditation	Specific commendation, identifiable to the individual, for strategic contributions, leading to sustainable improvements in student education.	Vice Principal Learning and Teaching/Head of School
External Awards for Teaching	Multiple awards (e.g. Exxon Mobil award in Engineering, Learned Society Awards)	External awarding agency

***With Internal Evidence***

<b>Activity, achievement</b>	<b>Evidence of Excellent Performance</b>	<b>Source of Evidence</b>
Edinburgh University Students’ Association (EUSA) Award Nomination for Excellence	Winner or "multiple runner-up" of major EUSA award.	EUSA + Head of School

## 5.2 Leadership in Student Education

### *With External Evidence*

<b>Activity, achievement</b>	<b>Evidence of Excellent Performance</b>	<b>Source of Evidence</b>
Major contribution to Policy Development for University Education	Sustained Leadership of a Major External Committee or substantive Working Group (e.g. Government, Scottish Funding Council, Higher Education Funding Council for England, Higher Education Academy, Quality Assurance Agency, Learned Society).	External Committee Organiser or Organisation
Development, Delivery of Innovative Learning (including online learning and Massive Open On-line Courses (MOOC))	Leader and Instigator leader of a high-impact innovative course (with external Source of Evidence of impact)	Vice Principal Learning and Teaching
Excellence in Internationalisation of Teaching	Sustained Leadership of new and significant international educational links and/or improvements to international Student Education.	Vice Principal Learning and Teaching
Excellence in Knowledge Transfer	Leadership in Development and Sustained Delivery of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) course.	External recipient of CPD

### *With Internal Evidence*

<b>Activity, achievement</b>	<b>Evidence of Excellent Performance</b>	<b>Source of Evidence</b>
Excellence in Developing Student Education and/or Support	Influential activity as Dean, Vice/Assistant Principal (In a Student Education Context).	Head of College/ Vice Principal Learning and Teaching
Strategic Leadership of Teaching Programme Review (TPR)	Convener of panels that lead to a significant improvement to the TPR process and/or to the programmes reviewed	Vice Principal Learning and Teaching
Substantial involvement in a 'step-change' development in Learning and Teaching	Leadership of Implementation Group at University and/or College level. Successful and significant innovation in learning and teaching adopted widely across the University.	Vice Principal Learning and Teaching

## 5.3 Dissemination of Excellence in Student Education (i.e. Publication)

### *With External Evidence*

<b>Activity, achievement</b>	<b>Evidence of Excellent Performance</b>	<b>Source of Evidence</b>
Authorship of influential textbook	Adoption in a course external to the University	External adopter(s) of textbook, publisher (e.g. sales figures).

Author of Publications on Subject-Specific or General Pedagogy	Multiple publications with demonstrable impact in the field (high citation count with respect to the journal's average)	Journal, Conference
Major invitations to speak on Subject-Specific or General Pedagogy	Multiple invitations at international conferences and/or internationally leading institutions.	Conference, inviting institution
Creation and maintenance of online materials for student education.	Influential peer-reviewable learning materials that are used widely beyond the University	External users of online learning materials.

#### 5.4 External Esteem and Recognition

##### *With External Evidence*

<b>Activity, achievement</b>	<b>Evidence of Excellent Performance</b>	<b>Source of Evidence</b>
Leading Contribution to Review of Teaching in another University	Major influence in a review panel external to University	External Appointer
Contribution to development of Quality Assurance in another University	Leader of Enhancement Led Institutional Review panel or equivalent at another institution	Quality Assurance Agency
Higher Education Academy (HEA) recognition	Principal Fellow	HEA

#### 6 History and Review

The original exemplars document was produced by a working group comprising Professor Alan Murray, Dean of Students, College of Science and Engineering; Sue Rigby, Vice-Principal Learning and Teaching and Lindsey Miller, Senior HR Partner (Reward), University HR Services and Sheila Gupta, Director of HR. It was subject to consultation with a wide range of senior academic colleagues across the three Colleges and published in September 2013.

Some minor edits for consistency of language were made in July 2015.

It is intended that the document will evolve and grow in light of experience and further examples. Feedback is welcome to to: [uhrs@ed.ac.uk](mailto:uhrs@ed.ac.uk)