

Implementation of the CPD Framework case study

<i>Name of Institution:</i>	University of Bedfordshire
<i>Title of Project:</i>	The Role of Administrators in Conducting Effective Field Boards of Examiners: Analysing Confidence, Understanding and Application
<i>Level:</i>	Cross faculty/department/campus
<i>Date of project:</i>	2010/11

1. The Project Brief

The project aims to analyse administrators' understanding of, and confidence in, accurately and consistently applying University of Bedfordshire undergraduate regulations. The project seeks to complement the process review being conducted by the Assessments Manager as well as the high level review of the University's regulations already taking place at the institution. This will be done by focusing on the role administrators undertake in applying regulations, and will strive to enhance the effectiveness with which Field Boards of Examiners are conducted. The project will succeed in increasing effectiveness via; improving understanding of regulations; increasing confidence in applying regulations; enhancing consistency in accurately applying regulations. The project will interpret a variety of quantitative and qualitative data. The AUA CPD Framework's professional behaviours will be utilised and a representative sample of data will be used. The project will cover three geographical sites, four academic faculties, professional and non-professional courses, and various types of undergraduate award. Questionnaires will be completed by administrators involved in the delivery of Field Boards of Examiners. Expected outcomes include, providing data needed to deliver high impact training; resources and documentation; improving staff confidence in applying regulations; complementing ongoing work within the University; sharing good practice; providing a form of internal peer review that can be implemented both within the institution and in the wider HE sector, and raising the profile of the AUA within the University.

2. Project Context

The University of Bedfordshire has recently undergone a merger and has been required to operate Field Boards of Examiners using three sets of regulations, depending on the particular academic legacy of each student (Luton University, De Montfort University, University of Bedfordshire). The period in which this measure was required in order to ensure that no student was disadvantaged has now come to an end. This presents an excellent staff development opportunity in terms of ensuring that all new and current staff are confident in operating within

the University of Bedfordshire regulations at all times, and that the necessary support mechanisms are in place to help them to do so. The University, whose multiple faculties are based across different geographical locations, has recently undergone a QAA audit with excellent results. However, it is vital that consistency and accuracy are maintained in terms of the application of regulations, and that a strong momentum is maintained in terms of QA at the institution. The University's regulations are now undergoing review with the intention of new regulations being implemented in 2012/13. The project will seek to use the previous experiences of administrative staff implanting changes in regulatory procedure to provide advise on how best to manage and communicate these future changes with regard to support staff within the institution.

3. Project Participants

The project aims to involve as many of the Programme/Field administrators in the University as possible. This will be done through the peer based project team, questionnaire, data gathered, and information disseminated. The project will also involve the Assessments Manager, planning department, Chair of the Undergraduate Scheme Board of Examiners and Assistant Academic Registrar.

4. Outline of approach taken

The aim of the project has been to involve Programme/Field administrators in open discussions and developmental workshops, alongside collecting data from a variety of sources, in order to best assess how to improve understanding of regulations, increase confidence in applying regulations and enhance consistency in accurately applying regulations. We will use the CPD framework as a neutral pathway into discussing confidence and application in terms of the University's undergraduate regulations and will endeavour to undertake the project in a transparent, open, peer led and peer reviewed way.

5. Materials used

In order to analyse administrators' understanding of, and confidence in, accurately and consistently applying regulations, a small project team will consider the following data for a selection of undergraduate provision at the University of Bedfordshire:

- ◆ Data acquired from completed questionnaires
- ◆ Student Profiles
- ◆ Field Board of Examiner minutes
- ◆ Scheme Board of Examiner minutes
- ◆ SITS (student records system) data
- ◆ Chair's Action (SITS data and paperwork)
- ◆ Other pertinent data suggested by the wider project team

The project team assessing the data will consist of what is expected to be no more than eight administrators. The team will conduct the project from start to finish by devising the questionnaire, analysing the chosen data, and making recommendations to ensure the project aim is met. The team will ensure that the AUA CPD Framework's professional behaviours are considered and developed in relation to the project aims.

To ensure a representative sample of data is used to conduct the project, eight Field Boards of Examiners will be considered as a starting point. They will represent a selection of geographical sites, the four faculties, both professional and non-professional courses, and different types of undergraduate award (e.g. Foundation Degree, BSc, BA).

The questionnaire will be completed by Field and/or Programme Administrators involved in the delivery of Field Boards of Examiners. The project will aim for an 80% target completion rate for the questionnaire, with a minimum of 50% required before we can analyse the data.

6. Observations, learning points

Our initial learning points are as follows. We will expand on our experiences so far in the final case study. Early on we learned the difficulty of attempting to deliver a project within a busy institution. Time and resource issues were difficult to manage. We also established very early on that communication would be a key theme of our project. The group sessions we held did, in themselves, provide positive responses as they allowed members of staff undertaking the same roles across different departments, faculties and campuses to discuss their interpretation and application of the regulations, their skills and best practice ideas, as well as their own personal experiences of the roles. The value of this kind of team activity, which soon highlighted to us the key areas where clarification would be required from senior staff regarding the regulations, is that it allows for communication, clarification and the building of new ways of working together.

7. Evaluation

We have now began the process of evaluating the project and will be updating this case study, and adding to it our appendices, by 21 November 2011.

8. Conclusion

We are in the process of drawing out the conclusions of the project and will be presenting these as part of the case study along with presentation and other relevant documents by 21 November 2011.