

Expectations of Academic Staff at Anglia Ruskin University

Introduction

This revised paper is written within the context of our University Strategy. We have a number of supporting strategies which all underpin our commitment to, and support for, the achievement of the goals and milestones in the University Strategy to ensure our continued success.

The HE environment will become even more competitive in the future in terms of attracting and retaining students, with an increased and important emphasis on student satisfaction with the overall student experience. Student satisfaction levels are currently identified and monitored in a variety of ways, through the National Student Survey and also from our module evaluations and customer service feedback mechanisms. There is increased public demand for this information. Our ambitious strategic plans identify how we intend to increase satisfaction levels to further develop the quality of the student experience, improving academic outcomes as well as enhancing our reputation, both nationally and internationally.

We recognise that the anticipated changes in the mix of student enrolments in the future and the more demanding nature of student expectations will be both stimulating and challenging for our staff. We need academic staff who are at the 'cutting edge' of their subject and are able and willing to build and then continuously improve their individual reputation and expertise in teaching, research and scholarly activity. We expect our academic staff to have or be working towards a doctorate level qualification.

This paper is intended to provide clarity in respect of the role of a member of academic staff at Anglia Ruskin University. We expect that all academic staff will take responsibility for achieving and maintaining consistently high standards in the three areas outlined below, recognising that the range, level and balance of expected contribution will vary depending on their experience, seniority and current role. Our probation and promotion systems underpin and support these expectations.

1. Contribution to learning, teaching, knowledge of the academic subject area and scholarship in the subject

Academic staff are expected to be experts in their field and to strive to be excellent teachers and facilitators of learning. It is axiomatic that academic staff should have an up-to-date knowledge of their subject/discipline, with appropriate breadth and depth so that they can create a high quality experience for students at all levels by:

- seeking out and responding to student feedback in positive, timely and professional ways
- planning their teaching in ways that allow appropriate learning outcomes to be achieved and preparing students appropriately for their working lives
- facilitating learning through a variety of means appropriate to the student, the level and to the discipline
- providing appropriate academic guidance and support to students

- designing and managing appropriate assessment and feedback schemes
- reflecting critically on their teaching performance, making continuous improvements to their practice and taking an interest in pedagogic issues
- responding to developments in their subject so that the academic portfolio remains attractive and current
- ensuring that they keep abreast of the use of technology, to aid learning and their ability to respond to the rapidly changing skills and expectations of the student body.

Teaching and support activity extends beyond taught programmes at undergraduate and postgraduate levels to include doctoral programmes. We are building a critical mass of research students in each Faculty and these students need to be supported by a skilled and committed cadre of research supervisors. Academic staff are expected to develop their skills and expertise as research supervisors in order to improve our supervisory capacity and to enable an increase in the number of research students.

2. Contribution to research, consultancy, professional practice and knowledge transfer

All academic staff are expected to be aware of and follow the commitments in the [Concordat to Support Research Integrity](#) and to familiarise themselves with the information on the [Research Integrity](#) web page. Academic staff should be at the forefront of knowledge in their disciplines by taking part in its creation and dissemination. Possession of, or working towards a doctorate is an important grounding for this. Academic staff are expected to contribute to the development of knowledge, application of knowledge and/or to the development of pedagogy in their discipline at an appropriate level. We have established a range of mechanisms which recognise and reward excellence in research and innovation.

We value a broad range of research – it is not limited to REF type research. We acknowledge that peer reviewed outputs in high ranking journals are very important in evaluating the quality of our research and individual researchers will be encouraged and supported in producing such work. However, other outputs such as textbooks, articles in good professional as well as academic journals, the presentation of conference papers, the design and creation of artistic works, artefacts and patents are also valued and encouraged. Pedagogic research is a field of considerable interest to us and some colleagues may wish to concentrate on this area of enquiry.

The definition of appropriate contributions to consultancy, professional practice and knowledge transfer is wide-ranging. We do expect all academic staff to be engaged in research as well as ensuring that, where appropriate, they ‘practice their craft’ to ensure the currency of their professional skills. Academic staff should be able to make a distinctive and scholarly contribution to the dissemination and application of new knowledge in their profession, public service or in commerce. Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs) are an excellent vehicle for combining professional and academic contributions. We value highly contributions to the academic and policy development of professional bodies at local, regional, national or international level. There should be reputational as well as financial benefits to Anglia Ruskin and to individuals from income generation, knowledge transfer or consultancy work undertaken. A whole range of other outputs in relation to industry and the public sector are viewed as contributions to professional practice and the nature of these will vary from Faculty to Faculty.

Many of our staff teach in areas that relate directly to a profession, public or industry sector. Insights gained from research, contributions to professional practice and consultancy activity should feed back into teaching. Staff should be able to reflect critically on their performance in research, external income generation and/or contribution to their profession. They should strive to continually improve the volume and quality of contributions and outputs. They are expected to seek external as well as internal funding to support their research. Academic staff are also expected to produce research and scholarly activity action plans to discuss and agree outputs as part of their appraisal. Evidence of research or agreed innovation in professional practice is a requirement within our revised appraisal process.

3. Contribution to the academic community and to professional standards

The academic role is a professional one and the academic community extends beyond the narrow boundaries of Anglia Ruskin. Academic staff have a considerable degree of autonomy in the conduct of their teaching and research; but they must also manage their workload, build relationships of trust and respect with academic and professional staff colleagues and discharge their responsibilities in a professional manner. This expectation of professionalism, support for colleagues and response to feedback from students and colleagues, is a significant and important part of the academic role.

All members of staff should be prepared to take on a reasonable share of the academic management and leadership load within their Faculty, attending departmental meetings and Open Days as required and acting as personal tutors, module and course leaders, *etc.* The type of role will vary depending on the experience, expertise and interests of the individual concerned. Our curriculum management structures emphasise the importance of academic development and leadership activity, and we will strive for structures which are as 'lean' as possible, consistent with good student support.

We expect all academic staff to be outward-looking and to play an active part in the wider academic and professional community. Each academic member of staff should seek to engage with external networks via activities such as, working as an external examiner, as a course approval panel member, as a member of editorial boards, participating in the work of their academic or professional body, attending conferences *etc.* These activities will be recognised and valued by our promotion processes.

The regional, international and community aspects of our vision are very important to us and we have set ourselves some ambitious growth targets in these areas. All academic staff will be expected to make an appropriate contribution to the work of our partner institutions (in the UK and overseas) and other community partners and stakeholders. This may include: visits to partner institutions; the development of appropriate distance learning materials and increased awareness when interacting with students and staff from different cultures and backgrounds.

All staff are required to abide by relevant rules and policies in relation to equality and diversity, ethics and Health & Safety legislation as part of their commitment to professional standards.

This document outlines our expectations of Anglia Ruskin's academic staff and does not attempt to describe the tasks of any particular member of academic staff in detail or to replace detailed job descriptions, person specifications, collective agreements or other documentation. The expectations outlined here do not extend in full to hourly paid staff, research-only staff, academic staff within professional services or other staff with a more narrowly defined or specialist role. A separate document (Expectations of a Professor at Anglia Ruskin University) provides additional specific details for those in a professorial role.