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Pedagogical international standard frameworks for higher education institutions

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Context

The Standards for Higher Education are rooted in the fundamental attributes of higher education provision. As a result of this basis, the Standards are designed to serve as a useful tool for higher education providers for the internal oversight of the quality of their higher education endeavours. There are several relevant pedagogical international standard frameworks that can be used by higher education institutions to benchmark their practices, improve teaching and learning quality, and align with international standards. This document shows several pedagogical international frameworks that provide standards and guidelines for various aspects of higher education:

Global Framework of Professional Teaching Standards:

This framework, a collaborative effort by Education International and UNESCO, is designed to enhance the quality of teachers and teaching, and to facilitate the implementation and tracking of the teacher target in the Education 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4).



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The 2030 Agenda for sustainable development is a comprehensive plan of action aimed at benefiting people, the planet, and prosperity. It directly aligns with the three pillars of sustainable development: social, environmental, and economic. The 2030 Agenda has expanded these traditional pillars of sustainability to include peace and partnership. The Agenda consists of 17 interlinked goals, 169 targets, and over 230 indicators for assessing progress. These goals strive to ensure no one is left behind by eliminating poverty, reducing inequality, safeguarding our planet, and fostering sustainable economies in a spirit of partnership and peace. To realize the transformative vision of the 2030 Agenda, we need to embrace new ways of thinking and acting, which necessitates transformative learning¹⁻³.

The SDG4



SDG 4 - Target 7

Quality education and continuous learning serve as a pathway out of poverty and a catalyst for progress throughout the 2030 Agenda. SDG4 is critically significant due to its transformative impact on the other SDGs. Specifically, **Target 4.7** is instrumental in accomplishing Agenda 2030. It underscores the influence of transformative education, an education that encourages *global citizenship, sustainable development, human rights, gender equality, peace, and appreciation of cultural diversity*. Transformative education is a type of education that nurtures engaged, proactive, and critical learners who act for sustainable development²⁻³. As educators, we should contemplate: How can we contribute to transformative education? What skills and competencies do our students need to develop to take actions in realising the transformative vision of the 2030 Agenda? What key competencies are my educational activities fostering? Is it feasible to balance learning objectives, skills, and competencies simultaneously?

International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)

This is a framework developed by UNESCO to facilitate comparisons of education statistics and indicators across countries.

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Higher Education Standards Framework

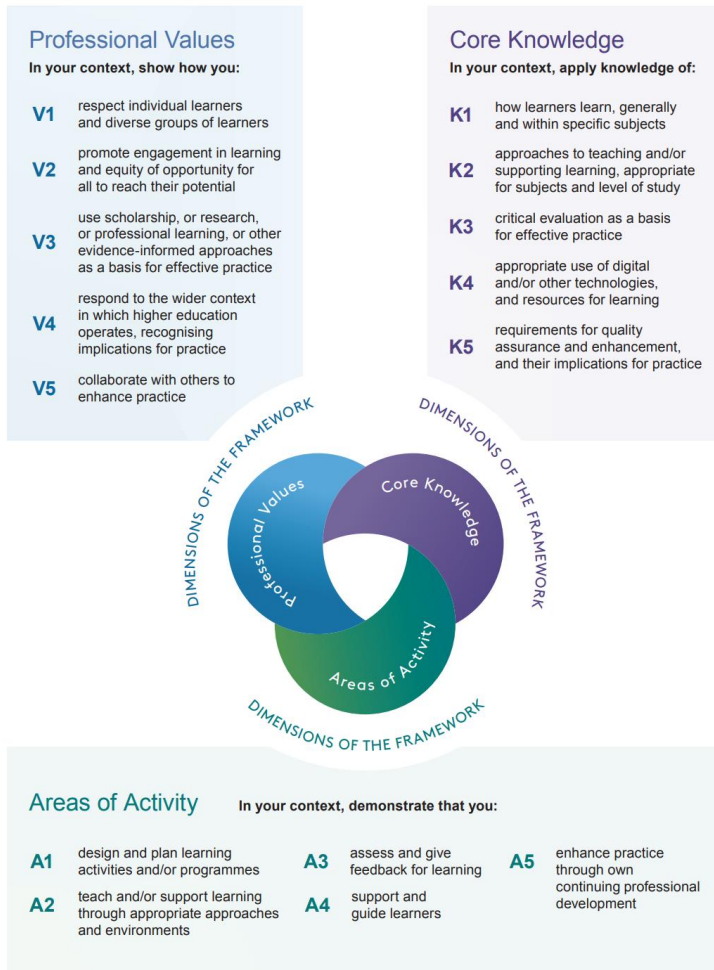
While this is specific to Australia, it provides a comprehensive framework that covers various aspects of higher education, including student participation and Attainment, learning environment, teaching, research and Research Training, quality assurance, Representation, Information and Information Management, Governance and Accountability. It serves as a guide to the quality of educational experiences that students can expect and as a reference for international comparisons of higher education.

Professional Standards Framework (PSF)

Created by Advance HE, the PSF is a framework acknowledged worldwide for gauging success in higher education teaching and learning. It pinpoints elements of effective teaching and learning through 4 Descriptors and Dimensions, comprising 15 statements that elucidate and characterize practice to identify the actions professionals take to facilitate high-quality teaching and/or learning support in higher education (see figure 1). The 2023 version of the PSF underscores the effectiveness and impact of teaching, context, inclusivity, digital/technology, professional values, student support, and collaboration ⁴.

Figure 1. The Professional Standards Framework

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Purpose of the Professional Standards Framework

- demonstrates to learners and other stakeholders the professionalism that colleagues and institutions bring to teaching and/or supporting learning.
- acknowledges the wide variety of local and global contexts in which higher education operates, and the diverse practices and roles that contribute to high-quality learning.
- identifies three related sets of Dimensions: Professional Values, Core Knowledge and Areas of Activity.
- presents, through four Descriptors, incorporating the Dimensions, a set of criteria statements against which individuals may evidence their practice.
- fosters critically evaluative, reflective and evidence-informed approaches to teaching and/or supporting learning in diverse academic or professional settings.

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- enables individuals and institutions to review and enhance practices in teaching and/or supporting learning, providing a focus for initial and continuing professional development.
- provides a structure to support institutions and individuals in advancing higher education practices to meet the evolving needs of learners and society, such as acting in support of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.
- provides a structure through which individuals and institutions may gain recognition for approaches that support high-quality learning.

Framework of criteria for high-quality higher education pedagogical research

This framework is mentioned as supporting the understanding of what constitutes internationally excellent research in higher education pedagogy. To foster sustainable high-impact pedagogies within higher education, a research-informed approach to learning and teaching is necessary, requiring substantial investment in developing staff capacity in high-quality pedagogical research. This investment is crucial for making informed decisions about delivering effective sustainable pedagogy, a need underscored by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In year 2020, Carol Evans discussed the question “What constitutes high quality higher education pedagogical research?”. In this study, C. Evans et al. showed a figure that identifies essential aspects of practice that need to be addressed as part of the professional development of a comprehensive academic, which necessitates a connection between research methods and pedagogical training. These areas encompass disciplinary knowledge, pedagogical proficiency, academic practice, contextual awareness, data analytic capability, research methodology expertise, and critical evaluation of practice. The pivotal issue is the quality of the integration of these components to fulfill the primary objectives of the research. A robust commitment to improving learning and teaching in higher education entails investment in high-quality educational research that is situated within and owned by the disciplines. Training is required to make educational and psychological constructs and understanding of ethics within pedagogy accessible and integrated within disciplinary practice. Comprehending the richness of various research methodologies and evaluation methods to incorporate within practice is a vital part of this ⁵.

Figure 2. Shows essential aspects of practice that need to be addressed as part of the professional development of a comprehensive academic by C.Evans et.al 2020

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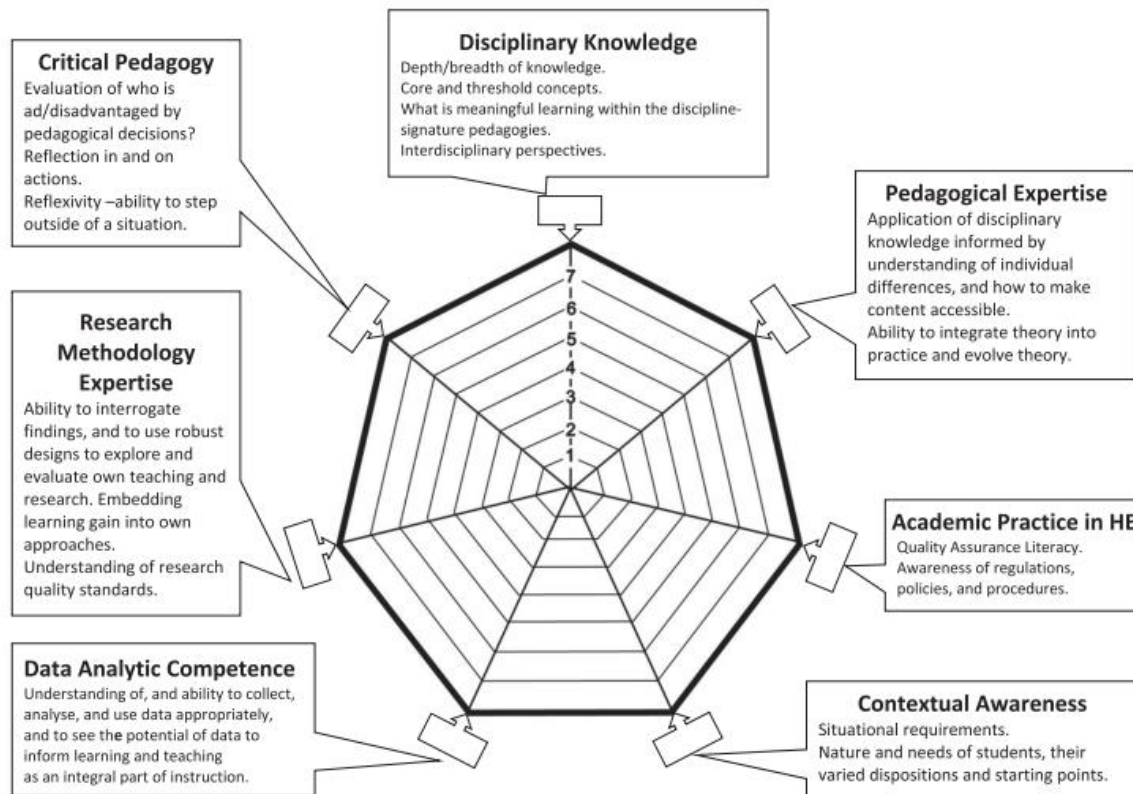


Figure 2. Integrated academic (from Evans, 2018).

Common Pedagogical Framework

These frameworks share common goals of improving teaching quality, enhancing learning experiences, and providing standards for professional development in education. They can be applied at individual, institutional, or national levels to improve teaching quality and celebrate success in educational practices. It's worth noting that while some of these frameworks have global reach, they may be adapted or interpreted differently in various cultural and national contexts.

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