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# Ireland's National Professional Development Framework Summary Findings of the Initial Implementational

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**IRELAND'S NATIONAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK**  
SUMMARY FINDINGS OF THE INITIAL IMPLEMENTATION



**NATIONAL FORUM**  
FOR THE ENHANCEMENT OF TEACHING  
AND LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

# **Ireland's National Professional Development Framework**

## Summary Findings of the Initial Implementation

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ireland's first national professional development framework (PD Framework) for all who teach in Irish higher education was launched in 2016, following a period of extensive consultation across the sector. An initial implementation (pilot study) was conducted during the academic year 2016-2017, involving 230 staff from universities, institutes of technology and private colleges across 22 groups. This report presents findings from this initial implementation stage of the PD Framework.

The evidence from the pilot has demonstrated the many positive short and long-term impacts of engaging with the national PD Framework. In addition, the strong, positive empirical evidence gathered from those who engaged with the Framework has highlighted the rigour and relevance of the Framework. Further, its underpinning and its values have been affirmed by the sector.

This report showcases evidence-based data and testimonials from the pilot study to demonstrate;

- the positive impact of the professional development process on individual participants
- the transformative potential on teaching and learning practice of engaging with the Framework
- that individuals who engage with the Framework can gain confidence in their teaching
- that the Framework can build strong, inclusive learning communities across all professional identities
- that the Framework can be effective across a wide range of professional identities of those who teach in higher education
- that the shared understanding of different types of professional development, the values that underpin the framework, and the domains that give it structure can work in practice.

### SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

#### Accredited and non-accredited professional development

The PD Framework enables participants to share a common language for describing accredited and non-accredited professional learning. Understanding that there are different types of professional development was considered beneficial.

#### Values

The five underpinning professional values of the PD Framework were recognised as important and relevant by all who engaged in the pilot study.

#### Domains

The five domains of the PD Framework are flexible and usable for a wide range of professional identities.

#### Reflective practice

Self-reflection and self-evaluation are valuable tools in personal and professional development. The PD Framework supports purposeful and critical reflection on everyday working practices to promote professional development. The Framework's reflective model is effective and applicable.

<b>Impact</b>	All groups identified short-term and long-term positive impacts from engagement with the PD Framework.
<b>Improvement and development of skills</b>	All groups reported that the PD Framework helped them identify how to improve their existing teaching and learning practice and embrace new approaches to learning.
<b>Confidence</b>	All groups expressed increased confidence in their teaching practice and the desire to improve their professional practice.
<b>PD portfolio</b>	The creation of a PD portfolio is a validating process, helping participants to understand the value of their professional roles within higher education. It is an essential tool within the PD Framework.
<b>Institutional support strategies</b>	Institutions need to use a series of support strategies to encourage and support engagement with the PD Framework. Institutions should provide time and space for staff to engage in professional development.
<b>Peer-support learning communities</b>	The establishment of peer-support learning communities are key to the success of the PD Framework through the facilitation of peer engagement, through sharing ideas and through collaborative approaches to problem solving.
<b>Allowing for learning across disciplines</b>	Cross-disciplinary groups encouraged participants to think differently about their own disciplinary approaches and methods and to learn from practices outside their disciplines.
<b>Senior management engagement is key</b>	Senior management engagement in supporting the PD Framework is crucial.
<b>Win hearts and minds</b>	Successful implementation of the PD Framework needs to involve all stakeholders. Staff need to see the benefit to them personally and professionally. The voices of participants can be powerful persuaders.
<b>Think about sustainability</b>	Successful use of the PD Framework depends on a careful analysis of the teaching and learning institutional context. A clear implementation plan should be drawn up with a realistic perspective on the time and commitment needed to work through the framework.
<b>Time</b>	Time is a precious commodity. Staff will not be motivated to engage with the PD Framework unless they are supported to participate.

## INTRODUCTION

### The Professional Development Framework

In mid-2016, the national professional development framework (PD Framework) for all who teach in Irish higher education was published by the National Forum (National Forum, 2016b). The PD Framework is underpinned by a set of core values and provides a structured outline of professional development domains for teaching and learning within the sector.

The Professional Development Framework aims to:

- empower staff to create, discover and engage in meaningful personal and professional development
- encourage staff to engage in peer dialogue and support
- enhance and develop the pedagogy of individual disciplines and enable learning from other disciplines
- assist staff to reflect on, plan and contribute to evidence-based transformative teaching and learning approaches
- contribute to the quality assurance and enhancement of the student learning experience
- drive improvement in, and raise the profile, value and culture of learning and teaching across the higher education sector
- guide higher education institutions in creating an environment in which staff are encouraged and supported to develop and reflect on their practice.

### What can the PD Framework be used for?

The central purpose of the PD Framework is to encourage all those who teach to reflect on and to develop their practice by engaging in continuous professional development throughout their careers. The PD Framework can help to:

- encourage a commitment to continuous professional development of all staff who teach in higher education
- provide a framework for identifying and structuring professional development plans, and for reflection on professional development activities
- foster creative and innovative approaches to teaching and learning
- facilitate and support the design and delivery of professional development programmes, modules and activities
- promote the professionalization of teaching in higher education
- support senior management in the development of policies and systems for the recognition and reward of teaching and learning support staff, and in the promotion of a strong culture of teaching and learning excellence.

## Who is the PD Framework for?

**Individuals who teach:** Irrespective of your role, you can use the PD Framework as a guide in planning your professional development. The Framework can help you at any career stage, whatever your professional development goals.

**Teaching and learning support centres/units:** If you are involved in supporting the professional development of all those who teach, you can use the PD Framework to design and structure your development programmes and those of disciplinary teams.

**Senior management:** If you have a senior managerial role in a higher education institution, the PD Framework will be key in helping you to support the professional development of staff who teach. For example, the Framework may inform decisions when related policies or processes are being developed within your institution. Also, by providing visible support for the PD Framework, you have an opportunity to encourage staff as they review their current knowledge, skills and competencies to improve the learning experiences of current and future students.

## Recent developments related to the PD Framework

Definitive strategies for implementing the PD Framework are emerging across the sector, with many being supported by the National Forum's Teaching and Learning Enhancement Fund 2016. A number of institutions are mapping their existing professional development offerings to the Framework. For example, the ATLAS project is mapping the accredited Learning Innovation Network Flexible Pathway used across institutes of technology. Maynooth University is also aligning its accredited provision to the PD Framework. Both are developing mapping tools which will be shared to support other institutions in a similar process. Other projects are focusing on developing opportunities for the professional development of senior staff. For example, the Crannóg project, led by NUI Galway, is taking an informal approach to engaging senior staff. In addition, a project at Letterkenny Institute of Technology, *Teaching and Learning Champions (TLC): A Professional Development Leadership Programme for Managers in Irish Higher Education*, is developing accredited provision for leaders in teaching and learning. From the disciplinary level, another project led by Dublin Institute of Technology, focuses on promoting, acknowledging and evidencing teaching and learning professional development activities for staff at a disciplinary level (engineering) within an institute of technology. Specifically, it considers how the PD Framework can complement professional development requirements described by professional bodies. Further information on all these projects can be found at [www.teachingandlearning.ie](http://www.teachingandlearning.ie).



The Higher Education System Performance Framework (2018–2020) sets out a requirement for all higher education institutions to begin implementing the PD Framework from 2018. The evidence gathered during this initial implementation phase reported here has confirmed the robustness and flexibility of the Framework for use within different contexts and by all those who teach, regardless of their professional identity or stage in career. A successful and sustainable adoption of the PD Framework is possible, but will require commitment from senior management within institutions, comprehensive planning for implementation, and freeing up of time and space for staff to engage with their continuous professional development.

## Evaluating the PD Framework: the purpose of this report

This report outlines the key findings and recommendations emerging from the initial implementation of the PD Framework across Irish universities, institutes of technology and private colleges in 2017. The purpose of the pilot study was to develop a robust evidence base of 'what works' within the PD Framework and to gather recommendations from the participants to inform future implementation of the Framework across the sector.

This report will be complemented by the following upcoming National Forum publications:

- insights on the PD Framework — aimed at senior management, teaching and learning experts, and staff on the ground
- resources to support the implementation of the PD Framework, for use by individual staff and those supporting teaching and learning within institutions including:
  - *Reflective Practice Guide*
  - *Support Strategies Guide*
  - *Sustaining Professional Identities of those who Teach*
- insights on open-access professional development programmes in teaching and learning, and associated digital badges

## METHODOLOGY

During the academic year 2016–2017, 22 pilot groups engaged with the PD Framework. The aim of the pilot study was to see how well the Framework worked in practice across different contexts. The pilot groups were geographically distributed and included a range of professional identities. The project itself was co-ordinated by a project manager and a ten-member Professional Development Expert Advisory Group.

The professional identities represented by the pilot groups included new and experienced academic staff from a wide range of disciplines, heads of department, part-time lecturers from industry, academic writing and maths support tutors, education developers, learning technologists, teacher educators, student teachers, careers advisors, librarians, and work placement co-ordinators. See Figure 1.

### Getting the pilot groups up and running

The national-level Professional Development Expert Advisory Group formed a core part of the support structure of the pilot study. Each member of the group was seconded to the National Forum from their institution for 30 days. The group, which liaised monthly, discussed and evaluated the progress of the pilot studies, acted as expert mentors for other pilot participants, made recommendations regarding future implementation, and identified key resource requirements.

At the beginning of the pilot study, a kickstarter workshop was held in each participating institution to introduce the PD Framework and to invite discussion with staff and senior management.

A pilot studies co-ordinator was assigned to each group and, in consultation with an expert mentor from the Advisory Group, the co-ordinator planned and negotiated the support for their group participants as they engaged with the Framework.

### Data collection

In order to evaluate the impact of the PD Framework, a survey was conducted among all of those who had engaged with the Framework during the pilot, to which 96 participants responded. In addition, 12 focus groups were held with pilot groups participants and two focus groups were held with members of the Advisory Group. The analysis of survey and focus group data was supplemented with a sample of the PD portfolios developed by participants as they engaged with the Framework.

PDF Pilot Groups		
Learning Support Staff	Lecturers in the Disciplines	Professional Stage
Teacher Educators (University)	Teachers who Research	Part-time lecturers with Industry Links
Teacher Educators (College of Education)	PhD Supervisors	Healthcare Professionals
Librarians	Business Lecturers	Nurse Educators
Work Placement Co-ordinators	Art & Design Educators	Heads of Department
Academic Writing Tutors	Lecturers in Humanities	New Teachers
Maths Learning Support	Experienced Lecturers in Disciplines	PG Teaching Certificate Participants
Educational Developers	Researchers who Teach	
Learning Technologists		
Career Advisors & Disability Liaison		

Figure 1 PD Framework pilot groups

## SECTION 1: OVERVIEW OF THE STRUCTURE AND IMPACT OF THE PD FRAMEWORK

**This section contains a brief overview of the structure and purpose of the PD Framework and how it proved its efficacy during the pilot.**

The PD Framework is Ireland's first professional development framework for those who teach in higher education. Its purpose is to assist and empower staff in developing, planning and engaging in professional development activities. The PD Framework is flexible and inclusive and can be used by all those who teach in higher education across a broad range of professional identities. The PD Framework is underpinned by a number of identified values and domains that help to guide individual staff on their professional development journeys, but may also be used by academic departments and institutions to recognize, inform, enhance and sustain professional development.

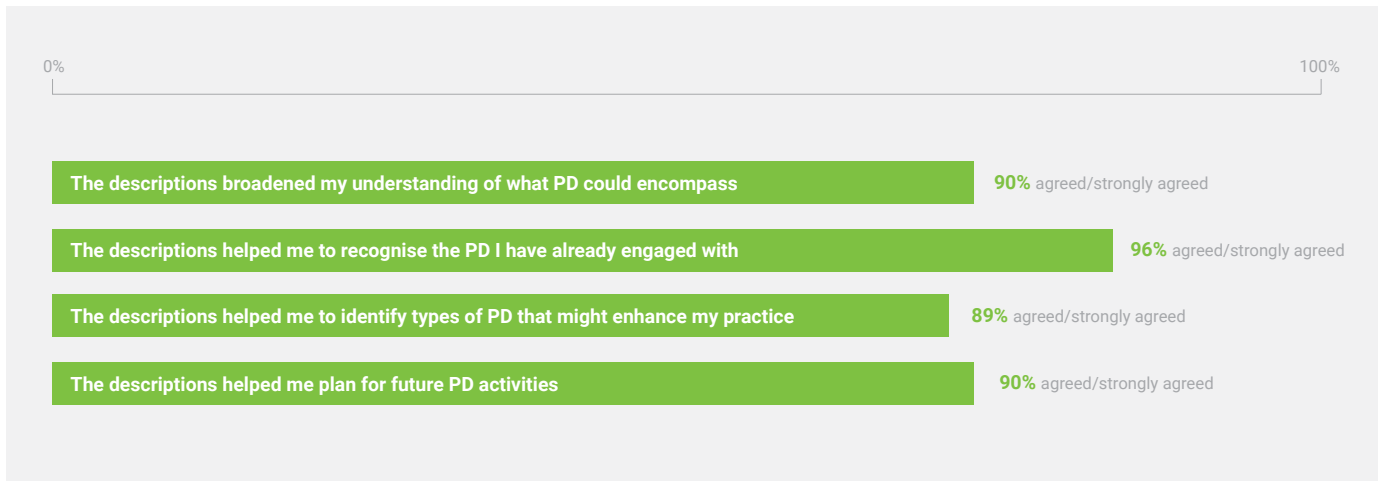
### National consensus on what constitutes professional development

One of the key aspects of the PD Framework, which resulted from the sector-wide consultation which preceded its development, is the nationally-agreed description of different forms of professional development (Table 1). Professional development can be accredited or non-accredited. Non-accredited professional development can be collaborative, structured or unstructured. These agreed descriptions provide a useful framework for encouraging those engaging with the PD Framework to consider the range of potential activities that constitute professional development for those with a teaching role.

**Table 1** Identifying and describing different types of professional development

NON-ACCREDITED		ACCREDITED	
INFORMAL	NON-FORMAL	FORMAL	
<b>Collaborative and non-accredited</b>	<b>Unstructured and non-accredited</b>	<b>Structured and non-accredited</b>	<b>Accredited</b>
E.g., conversations with colleagues, peer networking, peer observations, online blog or discussion forum	E.g., reading articles, following social media, self-study, watching video tutorials, keeping a teaching journal or portfolio, preparing an article for publication	E.g., workshops, seminars, MOOCs, conferences, summer schools, structured collaborative projects	E.g., professional certificate, Graduate Diploma, MA, PhD, EdD in Teaching and Learning, eLearning, Leadership in Education, education policy
Collaboratively led	Individually led	Led by an Institution, Network, or a Membership Body	Accredited and affiliated programme of study

The participants on the pilot reported that the acknowledgment of four types of professional development was a useful starting point and enabled them to think about what professional development means and what it could include. Having clearly articulated forms of professional development, with exemplars, helped individuals to consider professional development activities they had already undertaken or would like to take, and identify new possibilities for the future. (Figure 2)



**Figure 2** Participant views on the usefulness of the descriptions of the types of professional development (n = 73)

**Finding:** The clear definition of what constitutes professional development as outlined in the Framework provided a common language across all of the pilot groups to describe existing and potential professional development activities.

## Starting points for engaging with the PD Framework: the experience of the pilot study

One of the key objectives of the pilot study was to evaluate whether the professional values and domains of the PD Framework were implementable in practice, and whether the Framework was robust and flexible enough to be implemented across a range of contexts.

### The Values of the PD Framework

The PD Framework is a values-based framework, underpinned by scholarship relevant to all who teach in higher education. It is a framework that includes all types of professional development, encouraging those who teach to think about on-going and continual learning as part of their professional identity and practice. The five professional values embedded within the PD Framework are inclusivity, authenticity, scholarship, learner-centeredness and collaboration.

Pilot study participants highlighted that the PD Framework was adaptable to their roles, was relevant and meaningful to their professional development needs, and encouraged them to make evidence-based decisions. Further, the Framework was shown to support them as learners and encourage the creation of peer-learning communities.

There was less evidence that the Framework encouraged individuals to mentor staff, although this may be because this was their first engagement with the Framework and the pilot itself was of a relatively short duration. (Figure 3)

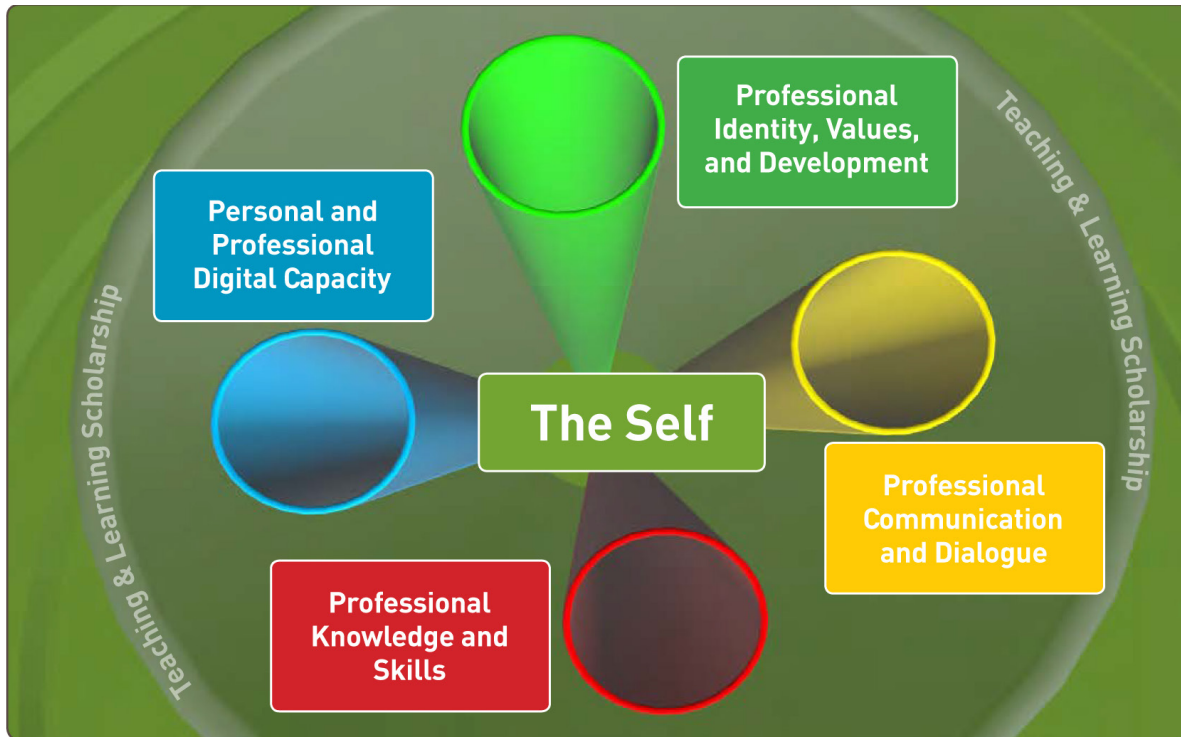


**Figure 3** Participant responses regarding the impact of the five professional development values (n = 74)

**Finding:** Across all of the professional identities represented within the pilot groups, there was strong validation and endorsement of the five professional values of the PD Framework.

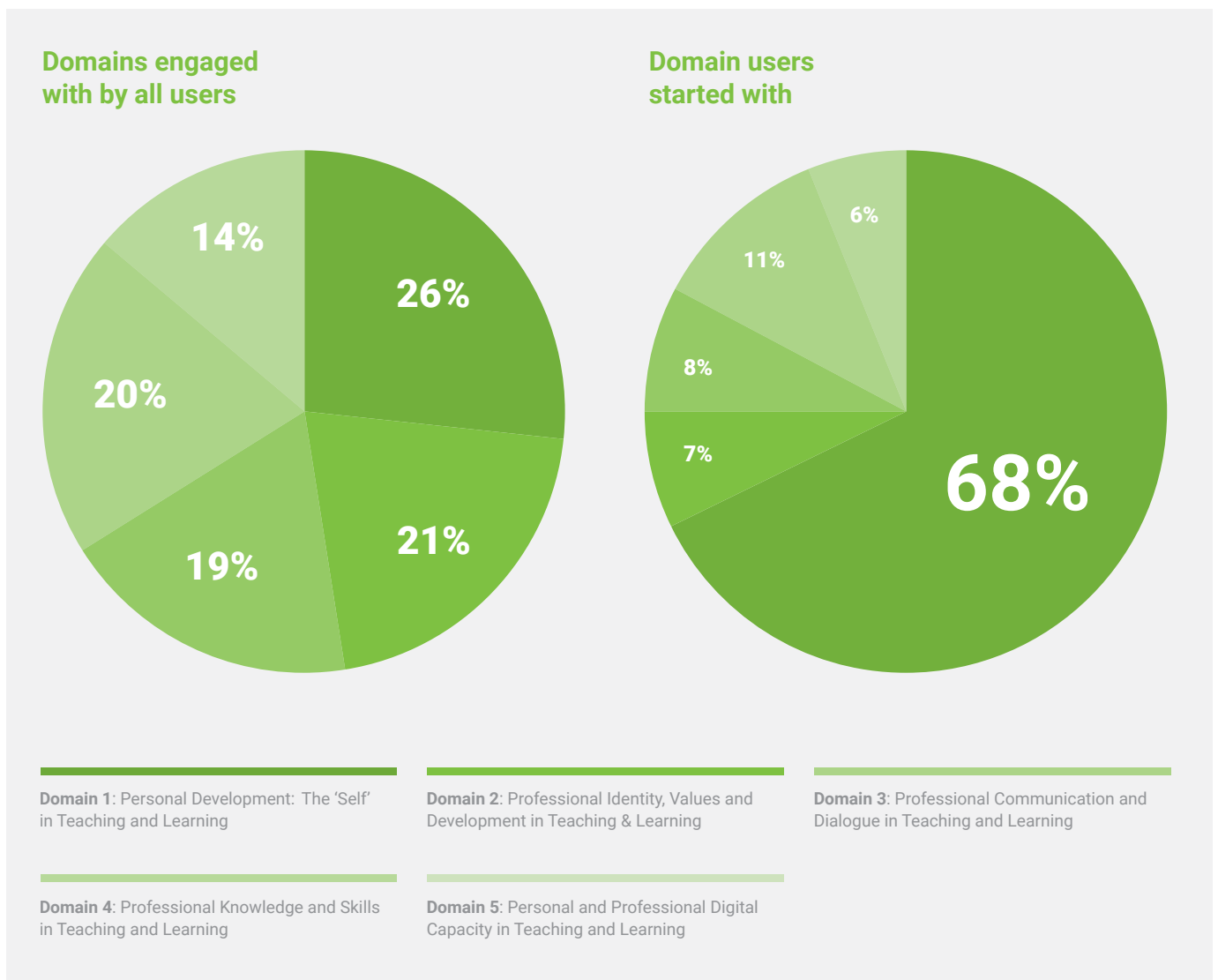
## The five domains of the PD Framework

The PD Framework identifies five distinct areas to assist the individual and their peer support learning community to explore how they may structure their professional and personal development. These areas are called domains. The domains are: The Self; Personal Identity, Values and Development; Personal and Professional Digital Capacity; Professional Knowledge and Skills; and Professional Communication and Dialogue.



**Figure 4** The five domains of the PDF

Participants in the pilot reported that the flexible structure of the framework enabled them to start their professional development journey with any of the five domains. Although each of the domains was engaged with by a number of participants throughout the pilot (Figure 5), the majority of the participants started with Domain 1, 'The Self'. (Figure 5)



**Figure 5** Participant responses regarding engagement with the five domains (n = 76)

A National Forum research study investigated what students across Irish higher education believe constitutes teaching excellence (National Forum, 2015d). Students outlined the importance of the individual character, beliefs, attitude and values of the teacher. This aligns with the importance given to the underpinning of core professional and personal values within the PD Framework. Many pilot participants also regarded the placing of the individual at the heart of the Framework as key to its success.

**Finding:** The PD Framework was suitably flexible to enable individuals to start their professional development journey by engaging with any of the five domains.



## The value of reflective practice

The PD Framework encourages participants and institutions to consider professional development as an ongoing, career-long process of engagement, relevant at all stages of their professional lives. It highlights the value of supporting individuals to think about their current knowledge and experience (reflection on experience), in addition to developing their capacity to shape and plan their future learning (reflection to improve action). This cyclical, considered approach to professional development is called reflective practice. Reflection is also closely associated with the scholarship of teaching and learning and involves consideration of both experience and research-based instructional, pedagogical, disciplinary and curricular knowledge. One of the significant findings of the pilot study was the transformative and empowering impact of this structured approach to reflective practice.

The guidance participants received in the process of reflecting on and evaluating their own practice and skills was an area that attracted very positive feedback. Being assisted and mentored in the reflection process was a key factor in building individual confidence and in encouraging participants to develop a personal philosophy and ethos around their professional work.

Central to the success of reflective practice was the development of a PD portfolio. This is an active working and learning space in which a participant may collect, share, and create experiences and resources that are useful for thinking about and evaluating their own professional practice. A PD portfolio may take the form of a journal, a blog, a video, a podcast or any platform where information may be gathered and/or shared. Participants acknowledged that although creating and maintaining a PD portfolio was time consuming, it enabled deep, evaluative thinking about their discipline, pedagogical approach, techniques, skills and future goals.

The reflective process encouraged participants to consider their current knowledge and experiences, to guide their development goals and to reflect on the evidence they could gather to support their decision-making. (Figure 6)



**Figure 6** Participant responses regarding the reflective, evidence-based nature of the PD Framework (n = 72)

**Finding:** Across all professional identities, participants valued the process of engaging with the PD Framework as a way of supporting them in reflecting on their own goals, knowledge and experiences.

## Impact of engagement with the PD Framework

Feedback from participants who were involved in the initial piloting of the PD Framework confirmed that it holds the potential to be both empowering for the individual who teaches, and transformational for teaching and learning across all institutions in the sector. Participants were asked what impact, if any, engaging with the PD Framework had on their teaching. They identified a range of short-term and potential long-term impacts.

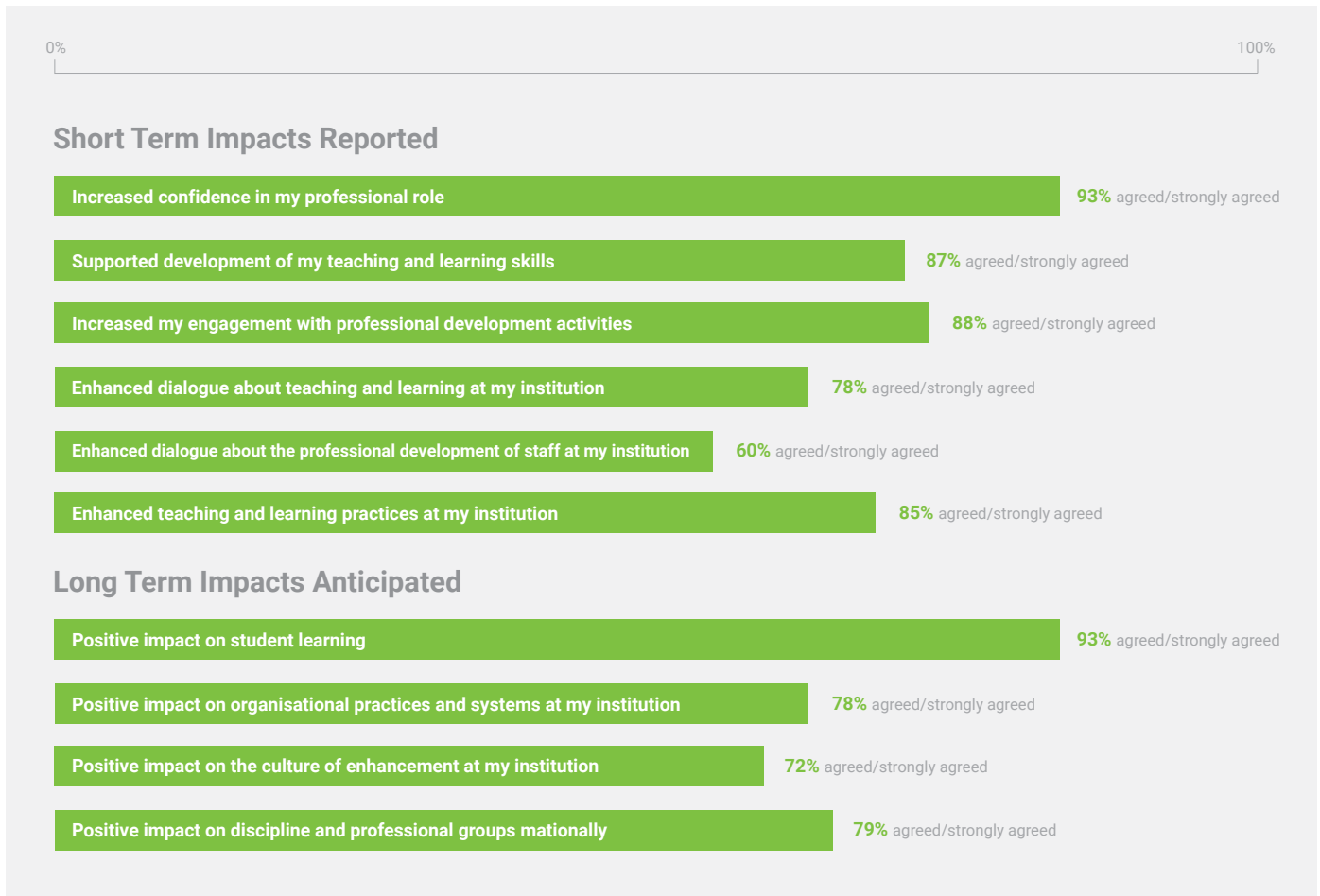
### Short term impacts identified included:

- increased professional confidence
- increased personal engagement with professional development activities
- enhanced teaching and learning practices
- development individual teaching and learning skills
- more dialogue and discourse about teaching and learning in their institution.

### Potential long-term impacts identified included:

- creation of a more positive learning environment for students
- increased impact on student learning
- enhancement of institutional culture more generally
- improvement of organisational practices and systems
- positive national impact on disciplines and professional groups.

Participants explained that they now felt more empowered to take risks in the classroom, to engage with technology and to use teaching tools (such as blogs and videos) that they may previously have overlooked. They reported feeling excitement about increasing their digital skills and capacity and incorporating technology into their teaching. (Figure 7)



**Figure 8** Participant responses regarding the impact of the PD Framework (n = 69)

## INSIGHTS FROM SECTION 1

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<b>Accredited and non-accredited professional development</b>	The PD Framework enables participants to share a common language for describing accredited and non-accredited professional learning. Understanding that there are different types of professional development was considered beneficial.
<b>Values</b>	The five underpinning professional values of the PD Framework were recognised as important and relevant by all who engaged in the pilot study.
<b>Domains</b>	The five domains of the PD Framework are flexible and usable for a wide range of professional identities.
<b>Reflective practice</b>	Self-reflection and self-evaluation are valuable tools in personal and professional development. The PD Framework supports purposeful and critical reflection on everyday working practices to promote professional development. The Framework's reflective model is effective and applicable.
<b>Impact</b>	All groups identified short-term and long-term positive impacts from engagement with the PD Framework.
<b>Improvement and development of skills</b>	All groups reported that the PD Framework helped them to identify how to improve their existing teaching and learning skills and embrace new approaches to learning.
<b>Confidence</b>	All groups expressed increased confidence in their teaching practice and the desire to improve their professional practice.
<b>PD portfolio</b>	The creation of a PD portfolio is a validating process, helping participants to understand the value of their professional roles within higher education. It is an essential tool within the PD Framework.

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# THE VALUE OF ENGAGING WITH THE PD FRAMEWORK

Feedback from participants across all of the pilot groups offered key insights about the value of engaging with the PD Framework. The Framework was found to encourage, nurture, support, challenge and be an enjoyable experience for those who engaged with it during the pilot, as the following comments from participants demonstrate.

## Promotes learning about other institutions and teaching models

“Our pilot group... had participants from both the IOT and the University sectors as well as both teachers and researchers and... we were learning about each other’s institutional realities... there are sectoral differences for example in terms of the workload model where researching takes place, there are commonalities too.”

“I’m excited about the new collaborations that we are doing together.”

## Supports pushing boundaries and exploring new technology

“I decided I’m going to push myself out of my comfort zone for this and I’m going to move into technology and use different tools... we did a video at the end of the pilot with the five of us reflecting on the process... and the brilliance of the group.”

“PD Framework breaks out of everyday working life... [it] encourages all staff to have interdisciplinary groups, this kind of light creative way of working where you listen to each other and bond with people who you don’t normally come into contact with... it would have a huge benefit in university-wide level... it was properly developmental.”

## Encourages the writing of a teaching philosophy

“I have never actually written a teaching philosophy statement of my own... this drove me to do it, so I have a basic one now and it’s so interesting to go through that process yourself.”

## Nurtures reflection on professional identity

“This is very much only the very beginning of my reflective learning and continued professional development practice. The longer-term aim is to continue to develop a sustainable professional development practice and simultaneously become a more open teaching and learning practitioner.”

“As I have acquired more confidence through working through the PD Framework, I would have no hesitation to support mentoring of other staff.”

“I was very taken with the idea of exploring the ways in which I mentor and interact with students, even though I’m not officially on the lecturing staff.”

## **Creates support networks and a teaching and learning community**

“The pilot process validates what the participants do... they feel special by being engaged with us... it has provided a space and a structure for conversation, so it has given them a shared language and they have created their own support networks which is very impactful for them.”

“It was really powerful, it created another community that I belonged to within the university.”

“We feel it could give us a voice; it might provide an opportunity for us [to] start conversations... at an institutional level.”

“I wanted to improve my teaching and knowledge of teaching and learning... and the PD Framework enabled me to be involved in the development of my profession at an early stage and learn from others.”

## **Enjoyment of engagement with professional development**

“I really enjoyed it and I look forward to the future. Coming from a teaching background in the U.S. and Ireland, I was used to working from guidelines/policies and I look forward to seeing something concrete in place.”

“I really enjoyed being a part of the pilot; I would love if it could continue.”

“The PD Framework gave us the opportunity to do, by thinking of amazingly different ways to teach and learn and to make great connections with people... it has the potential to genuinely help me grow intellectually”

“It gives you an adventurous spirit in teaching that I didn't have before like a risk taking. Its changed the way I look at thinking.”

# PERSPECTIVES ON THE VALUE OF ENGAGING WITH THE PD FRAMEWORK FROM DIFFERENT GROUPS WHO TEACH

## ‘Providing Structure and building Confidence’

### **ACADEMIC WRITERS AND MATHS LEARNING SUPPORT TUTORS** were

one of a number of groups who noted that the focus in universities is on research, publications and ratings and there are few formal criteria for teaching: Institutions are “allowed monitor the quality of their teaching themselves; and that’s no way to get quality measurement.” The group enjoyed the structure of the Framework noting that it enabled participants ‘to structure your own way of thinking about what you’re doing. I found it really helpful, just to step back from myself.’ They also felt that the process of reflection made them feel more confident in their knowledge and feel less of an “imposter”.

This group emphasised the importance of the reflective process, “you get better and deeper insight by being reflective.” “Academic freedom is important... there’s nobody pushing you or saying you have to do this; you do it because you want to.”

## ‘Recognising their role as teachers in higher education’

**CAREERS ADVISORS** reported that the PD Framework facilitated a reflective practice for their group, making them aware of the process of reflection and how to interrogate their experiences. They recommend simple instructions to be given at the start of the process with plentiful one-to-one support. In addition, they advised linking the PD Framework with institutional professional development, and to avail of an online space for documenting work, to “store evidence.”

The Careers Advisors group highlighted that as career advisors, they do identify as teachers: “I had become used to the idea that we were in fact teachers in higher education.” However, they pointed out that they educate in different ways to other teachers, which “probably isn’t recognised”.

## ‘Establishing learning communities, working together’

The **EXPERIENCED MIXED ACADEMIC GROUP** reported: “our pilot group has worked and we’re all quite willing to be here and have enjoyed it and benefited from engaging with it... we are a learning community.” “It just really kick-started something in my professional development.” The group reported a change in how they saw the PD Framework after using it: “I thought the idea of the PD Framework was great, but when I saw it first I thought it was too big, too much scope... but I have definitely changed that opinion over the course of the pilot study.”

They pointed out the value of working together on it: “At first I thought the document was long to have to go through, to read, internalize, figure out and then to try and make some sense of it in terms of yourself... but when we worked on it, it was fine.”

The group also pointed to time as a challenge: “I thought it would be tough to have enough time to do really well.” “I don’t think I’d have a sense of completion or perfection about any domain or achieving even the cycle unless I just felt it was an on-going process.”

## ‘The benefits of peer mentoring’

### **EXPERT MENTORS AND PD EXPERT ADVISORY GROUPS**

noted the impact of the PD Framework pilot study on themselves as Expert Mentors. The PD Framework provides a space for people to network, as teachers usually work individually: “it’s a fantastic tool for doing this kind of work”.

Time was the most consistent challenge for the Expert Mentors in supporting their pilot groups given institutional demands on their time. Being seconded was critical to making their role work and without secondment it would be very difficult to find the time needed for supporting the PD Framework process. There were many positive aspects to their work but supporting emergent learning communities had the highest impact. The Expert Mentor in the Teacher Educator group observed: “in my pilot group, building a sense of community is a process that’s validated by what they do... it has provided a space and a structure for conversation... given them a shared technical language and then they have created networks.” The role of the Expert Mentor was appreciated by a group who noted: “the bonds in our group were strengthened even further with the Expert Mentor and other academics and personnel involved in the pilot. Our group became like a peer mentoring group and it is envisaged that we might continue as such.”

## ‘Importance of having an agreed vocabulary for discussing PD’

**HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS** found it a valuable, accessible, well-structured framework. Its benefit was in introducing a robust vocabulary for initiating institutional conversations around the importance of values and to provide a framework to articulate key concerns. This group suggested participants could be motivated by aligning PD with continuous professional

development and to be able to achieve CPD points or credits “towards your Medical Council or your Physio CPD”. This group placed a high value on identity: “my professional identity is so much of what I do in teaching”. A small number in this group found the reflection process a challenge at first, “to get into that space for someone in a scientific background”.

## ‘It takes time to get your head around the PD Framework but it is worth it’

### ‘Structured and planned peer support helps’

**NEW TEACHERS** were very vocal about the impact that the PD process had: “I feel more open about teaching, better at reflection, and better able to deal with student feedback.” They were clear that peer support was essential to help them with detailed aspects of the structure: “I found the discussions brought the document to life.” “You do need that structure, otherwise it is a string of consciousness, it becomes almost random.” The kickstarter workshop was identified as important for helping them understand the process ahead: “It was from the group meetings here that I started to really understand what was expected of us or what we could gain from going through this process.” “I think I would have really struggled if I had to do this by myself...you really need the group discussion.” “The idea of the group meetings is great but you have got to be careful in an institutional environment that the group that you’re dealing with is not the same group that you’re working with every day... if you’re going to have effective group meetings to discuss things... it should really take in peers from different parts of the institution.” Making sure that hierarchies and silos were dismantled was very important to ensure ‘it is not replicating the same structure that the person is working in on a day-to-day basis.’



Like other groups, time was noted as a challenge: “I found it hard to find time to dedicate.” “It’s better to work in bursts over time rather than consistently e.g. weekends, Friday evening.” Although some were initially overwhelmed they reported that it becomes reasonable over time: “Even though I have been teaching for five years, even with that experience it still seemed a little bit daunting at the start, as I did not have a lot of experience with the PD Framework at first.”

## ‘Empowering and rewarding’

**LIBRARIANS AND EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPERS** noted that “the pilot study has been a very empowering and rewarding experience for us.” Librarians especially welcomed “this recognition of the teaching role of librarians and are grateful for this opportunity to record our input. We really enjoyed the pilot; it was well structured, thought out and well supported, it seemed to run effortlessly, which of course means there was a lot of work behind the scenes by the National Forum and the Pilot Co-ordinators.” Some found the Pilot study expanded their understanding of PD activity: “Prior to this meeting I had a view that PD was limited to a structured, formally badged activity, such as attending a conference or participating on a course. I hadn’t taken into account how the everyday research I undertake could be understood to be a PD activity. Equally I hadn’t associated the conversations and collaborations that I have with colleagues across faculties can be a valid and measurable PD in an informal context. With this in mind I will be monitoring and logging these activities and exchanges in a more organised and consistent manner.” Educational developers felt that the PD Framework helped them clarify a forward trajectory in PD.

## ‘Inter-disciplinary groups help to give new perspectives’

### ‘PD Framework supports innovation’

## ‘Value of teaching and learning is less than that of research in higher education institutions — this needs to be addressed’

**NEW ACADEMICS PARTICIPATING IN A PG CERT IN TEACHING** had a lot to say, this is probably not surprising as they are professionals embarking on new career paths. Being part of a peer group, having access to Expert Mentors, and being facilitated in a structured process were key positives. The day-long writing workshop was highly valued. Workshops were seen as crucial supports in different aspects of the PD Framework such as writing and self-reflection.

Working with unfamiliar language and domains was both challenging and empowering: “it gives you a vocabulary to articulate what you’re doing” “I was very nervous approaching the Self at first... it’s really hard for me to talk about myself in a positive way.” “Some of us are... getting a brow beating for trying different things by people who would be coming from a very traditional background... the PD Framework... it’s giving the vocabulary to defend yourself in those situations.” “it’s good to know that there are other ways of doing things and getting new ideas.”

This group shared a range of positive perspectives: “It’s a very comprehensive way just to reflect back on yourself as a teacher and it’s a very good mirror to hold up to what you do in the university.” “The PD Framework... is important because it’s empowering us to do what we do best, we are teachers here, we are also learners.” “It helped me recognize strengths what I was

doing right and what I would like to keep doing, weaknesses or what I need to improve or change or attitude in teaching.”

The PD Framework has the potential to break out of everyday working life and support people to work with colleagues across disciplines. “It’s liberating that we’re not with people in our own discipline, that we can be free to say what we like. It’s really important.” “The PD Framework gave us the opportunity to do, which is thinking amazingly different fun ways and to make great connections with people... to genuinely intellectually grow.” They appeared excited about the PD Framework and the opportunities for creativity in teaching it supports: “It gives you a sort of adventurous spirit in your teaching that I didn’t have before, like a risk taking.” There is a recommendation to “marry” the PD Framework with the teaching qualification: “I would embed it in the PG Cert and would give credit for it and I would marry it with the Framework.”

Some members of the group noted that the PD Framework’s support for teaching as a valuable activity was at odds with their home institution: “the university doesn’t support this type of activity... so on the one hand I’m caught between wanting to do more and spending more time in the teaching domain... the reality is teaching is weighted like a feather and research is weighted like a gold nugget... the university needs to take this seriously. It needs to be embedded properly.” There was a shared opinion that teaching is undervalued and the PD Framework can help give teaching the recognition it needs: “Teaching is not at the top table. I don’t know if the PD Framework will change that, I’m hopeful that it will put some pressure on the system to take notice... and will push the structures to react to something to happen at structural level.”

## ‘Challenged to consider where the boundary was between their role as a professional and their role as teacher’

**PART-TIME LECTURERS WITH INDUSTRY LINKS** noted a positive, energising impact in a number of ways: “I hope that maybe doing the domain on teaching will make my job easier or make me better at it”; “this will allow us to put some formal shape on... life qualifications that we have”. Confidence-building was cited as a clear benefit of PD Framework engagement: “It certainly gave me confidence in... the everyday things you do and it’s what you do for a living, but it gave me confidence that it is relevant, and you know you can change things.”

The support sessions with the Expert Mentor proved invaluable for some participants: “I found it easier to engage when we were in... discussions, meetings where you hear other people and what they’re thinking”; “I enjoyed group engagement — when you come together as a group... it helps... you learn a lot from each other.”

This group felt that the PD Framework challenged how they considered their professional identity as a teacher. They struggled to find “where the boundaries are between their role as a teacher and their professional role”. Which one should they invest time in? Being asked to think about themselves as teachers was challenging: “I naturally would find [it] harder because... I would consider myself much less of an expert.” Some in this group found the language and comprehension of the framework difficult initially. It was felt that it takes a while to get on board with language as they are professionals who teach, with no formal teacher-training: “I think it’s inaccessible if you haven’t spent a lot of time[thinking] about... terminology, your teaching philosophy”. However, reflecting on the impact of working in industry on how they teach, they learned they can bring real examples to class e.g. case studies: “I don’t think [I] realised how wonderful that was and how valuable it was to the learner.”

## 'The PD Framework had a profound impact on a personal and professional level'

### 'Impact was critical to engagement'

**TEACHER EDUCATORS** believed strongly that the impact of the PD Framework engagement was evident in their completed collaborative PD Portfolio: "The PD Framework has had a profound impact on all members of our community of practice on a professional and personal level."

This group used the framework as a conceptual foundation for its T&L conversations, reflection, activities and planning. They gave particular focus to certain aspects of the types of learning described in the framework, specifically, the difference between formal and informal learning: "Our discussions and planning were informed by the formal learning experiences and expertise that each member of the group brought". Informal learning developed as an outcome of each participant conversing and engaging in reflective and clarifying questions of one another i.e. "using the formal learning encounters as a springboard into reflection on our assumptions, beliefs and values regarding learning.

"Impact was critical to engagement: "I was excited... because one area we could improve on was digital capacity and incorporate a bit more technology into my teaching, so the PD Framework definitely helped to guide that." They felt that students using technology in the classroom encouraged them to use digital tools also. The Kickstarter workshop and subsequent group discussion sessions helped overcome initial uncertainties. "This actually has increased my confidence from going through this process." "I think I was just daunted from the start that I would have to write. I hate writing... but I really do like the fact that you can do a five-minute blog or gather pictures." They highlighted why their group worked: "They have a choice to be there, by volunteering." "We realise the importance of reflection and being non-judgmental... because

teaching is all reflection, always improving, you never get to an end." They advised a need for support for inexperienced teachers "There is a need for a lot of support for some groups of people to engage."

The group used agreed ground rules "as a psychological safety container and this contributed to and enhanced the building of trust and relationship". They used evidence from their individual and collective experiences as well as "reflections and feedback from students, engagement with the parents who contributed to our work and their perspectives and information gleaned from the relevant research literature".

### 'PD Framework facilitates engagement with others through problem solving'

**TEACHERS AND RESEARCHERS** were clear that if the reflection process continues over time, it has the potential to improve teaching and work overall. The process builds confidence and allowed them to acknowledge how much they actually do. The PD Framework structure enabled planning, getting them to think about implementing ideas and new technologies. They enjoyed the process of reflecting on the self, which they usually do not have time for: "It was far more enjoyable that I thought it would be." The PD Framework facilitates engagement with others through problem solving because in working through challenges... there is not much institutional support for this at the moment. The biggest challenge for this group was identified as time; they felt the work should be formally assigned, and a need to convince others of its importance. A key to supporting PD engagement is to have the institution on board and to have the PD Framework endorsed by the organisation. They argued that PD needs to be implemented throughout the sector and not just the institution. Sharing beyond the institution and dissemination to the public about what is happening is needed: "we are professional teachers, researchers who want to be better."

## **'Time needs to be available to have the luxury to think, reflect and create'**

### **WORK PLACEMENT CO-ORDINATORS**

were delighted to engage with the PD Framework because they felt they are not seen as teaching staff but administrative staff. "they don't expect us to think of ourselves as teachers in a traditional sense of teaching." This group want recognition of them as providing a teaching role, rather than being perceived as administrators. Like many other groups they reported time and workload as one of the biggest challenges: "time became an issue... having the luxury to think, to reflect, to create." They suggested that summer time or end of term is the best time to attend PD Framework workshops within working hours: "it is really important to have support and time to do it in our working day." At the beginning of the process it would be helpful to talk to a mentor who has already implemented the PD Framework who knows what is ahead.

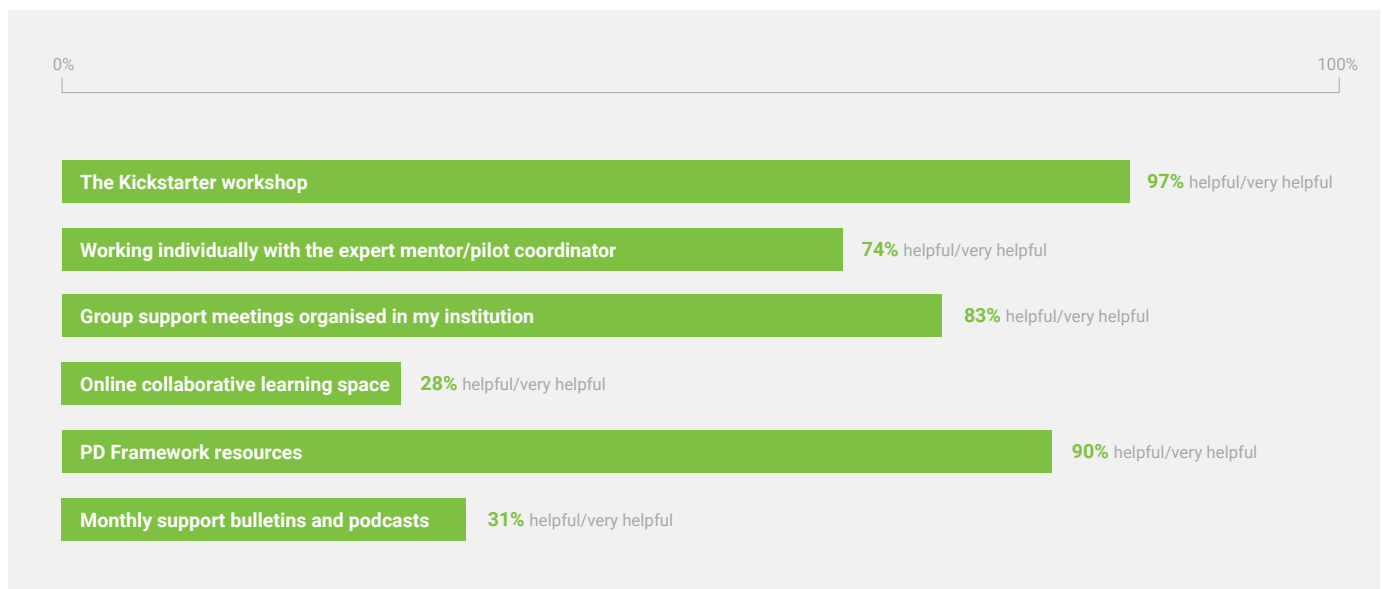
The group thought that the PD Framework structure facilitated conversation around aspects of their job that would not normally be discussed. The Expert Mentor for this group noted how "they really embraced the PD Framework and I can actually see a huge change in them since they started. What is important to note is that the PD Portfolio has not stopped for them – they continue to work on it and... they are reflecting on what they are delivering in their classes [and] how they are doing it. What they really liked was having a dedicated space to store evidence of learning. "The PD Framework has certainly exceeded my expectations as an expert mentor – all in this pilot group are now considering signing up for the diploma in teaching and learning."

## SECTION 2: IMPLEMENTING THE PD FRAMEWORK AT INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL

The PD Framework has been proven to be robust, flexible and accessible to all professional identities, as well as impactful on a range of levels (Section 1).

**This section provides insights into what worked and why at an institutional level during the pilot. It also summarises the key insights and recommendations for implementation suggested by participants.**

During the period of the pilot study, there were a number of different engagement strategies used to support participants in their groups. Pilot participants reported that Kickstarter workshops, peer support and mentors were the most valued institutional supports (Figure 8). Online collaborative spaces, update bulletins and podcasts were considered less effective.



**Figure 9** Value of different forms of supports provided to participants

One factor reported as most influential by the participants was being a member of a peer-learning support community. Many such communities developed spontaneously as a form of support during the pilot, others built on existing communities and networks.

The PD Framework clearly identifies the importance of ongoing peer support and mentorship as a means to facilitate relationship building. Participants highlighted the important role that peer-learning communities have in providing ongoing support and helping to building individual confidence. They provide useful and safe spaces for talking about teaching and learning.

It was found that these communities can break down barriers between those from different disciplines and those with different professional identities. Within the pilot groups, one of the reported potential benefits of cross-disciplinary learning communities was the encouragement to think more actively about their disciplines. By engaging with colleagues from different disciplinary and professional backgrounds, participants were able to see both the limitations and innovations within their own pedagogical frameworks and methodologies. Many participants reported that they were excited to learn about different methods and approaches from peers and were keen to adapt techniques and skills from different disciplines within their own professional practice. This finding was particularly evident with regard to learning how to use and experiment with digital technologies.

## **Institutional support strategies: what works**

- Acknowledge the importance of all forms of professional development.
- Formalise professional development engagement within the activities of the institution.
- Kickstarter workshops are effective to help those beginning to engage with the PD Framework to get started, but these need to be scheduled during non-teaching times.
- Host ongoing workshops on aspects of professional development (e.g., reflective practice, writing, and portfolio development).
- Establish peer-support learning communities that are diverse and cross-disciplinary.
- Identify expert mentors/champions of professional development and initiate a formal mentoring system.
- Establish and support facilitated online spaces to encourage collaboration.

## **Recommendations and insights for implementation of the PD Framework**

Pilot groups provided detailed information and advice for individuals and for institutions in successfully implementing the PD Framework.

### **Summary of key insights and advice for individuals wishing to engage with the PD Framework**

- Attend a kickstarter workshop to gain an overview of the process.
- Join a diverse working group with participants drawn from across a range of grades, disciplines and departments.
- Identify a dedicated mentor in your institution who has previously completed the PD Framework and who is able to provide you with one-to-one support.
- Understand and be clear about the role of the expert mentor for your group.
- Be organised: structure your time from the outset and understand the time commitment.
- Maintain your momentum: attend or initiate regular workshops in writing and reflective practice to encourage ongoing participation. Schedule a mid-point review to refocus attention and to get you or your group back on track.

- Create a digital space, or similar, for documenting your work as part of your PD Portfolio and to build your personal and institutional expertise. For example, create an ePortfolio system with all of your online resources within it as reference points. Use imagery, blogs, wikis, etc. to capture your professional journey.

### Summary of key insights and recommendations for institutional supports

Individual staff need to be supported by their institution to engage with the PD Framework in an authentic manner to ensure engagement in continuous professional development throughout their careers. Considerable effort at institutional level is required to support the successful implementation of the PD Framework across the sector. Key insights from the pilot groups about acknowledging the value of the PD Framework and embedding it institutionally are as follows:

- **Engage and elicit support from senior management:** Senior management support for the benefits of professional development is essential. The results of the pilot study are clear on the value of institutional support and encouragement of personal and professional development both to the individual and to the culture of the institution.
- **Time and workload:** Provide time and space for individuals to engage in professional development. Time (or lack of) was the most consistently mentioned challenge within the pilot study. It was the top obstacle experienced by all the pilot groups.
- **Ensure parity with other institutional priorities:** Teaching and Learning is sometimes perceived as not having the same institutional status as Research. Understanding the beneficial impact of professional development on organisational morale and commitment needs fuller recognition by institutions.
- **Embed into HR processes:** In cases where individuals are seeking to accredit their professional development activities, finding a way to align these activities within accredited programmes would be beneficial. However, it is important to recognise that not all professional development activity needs to be accredited.
- **Align professional development activities with existing credentials:** Finding a way to align or credit professional development activities within credited programmes would be highly beneficial. For example, professional development activities to count towards the PG Certificate or towards CPD for the Medical Council or other professional bodies.
- **Showcase professional development as part of institutional achievements:** Colleagues who gain recognition for their expertise in teaching and learning (for example, through DELTA awards or digital badges) are important advocates for the excellence of their institutions.
- **Encourage evidence-based approaches to teaching and learning:** All aspects of implementing and monitoring the impact of the PD Framework should be based on considering what works and why.



## INSIGHTS FROM SECTION 2

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<b>Institutional support strategies</b>	Institutions need to use a series of support strategies to encourage and support engagement with the PD Framework. Institutions should provide time and space for staff to engage in professional development.
<b>Peer-support learning communities</b>	The establishment of peer-support learning communities are key to the success of the PD Framework through the facilitation of peer engagement, through sharing ideas and through collaborative approaches to problem solving.
<b>Allowing for learning across disciplines</b>	Cross-disciplinary groups encouraged participants to think differently about their own disciplinary approaches and methods and to learn from practices outside their disciplines.
<b>Senior management engagement is key</b>	Senior management engagement in supporting the PD Framework is crucial.
<b>Win hearts and minds</b>	Successful implementation of the PD Framework needs to involve all stakeholders. Staff need to see the benefit to them personally and professionally. The voices of participants can be powerful persuaders.
<b>Think about sustainability</b>	Successful use of the PD Framework depends on a careful analysis of the teaching and learning institutional context. A clear implementation plan should be drawn up with a realistic perspective on the time and commitment needed to work through the framework.
<b>Time</b>	Time is a precious commodity. Staff will not be motivated to engage with the PD Framework unless they are supported to participate.

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