



The Future of the Teaching Profession

Background document

Workshop Higher Education and Research

The future of higher education employees

The workshop on higher education will be divided into two sessions. In the first, Andrée Surssock from EUA has been invited to give a presentation of the latest findings of the TRENDS-report, which is the contribution from EUA to the coming ministerial conference of the Bologna process in May 2015. She will also open a debate on the findings. The EUA-survey among the institutions have this time had one of its focal points on working conditions and career prospects, with a particular focus on quality teaching. So we hope that her presentation will give us valuable input to the second half of the workshop which will focus on a development of our own ideas on how to enhance the value of high quality teaching in the future of the teaching profession – also in higher education.

If quality teaching should be more in focus, it will also be necessary to consider how to create a system, where good teaching is valued at a more balanced level as good research in relation to the academic career, salary negotiations etc. The simple question is why anyone could be expected to put high amounts of work and energy into an activity which is valued by the students of course, but hardly have any influence what so ever on assessments and decisions on promotion etc., where the research component is so dominating over teaching??

The overwhelming problem is how to make an easy, transparent and non-bureaucratic system of documenting teaching activities which isn't just a new requirement of an additional set of documentation on top of what is already excessive? We are looking for something which can improve good teaching – not an extra burden for teaching staff.

So if we want to enhance the importance of good teaching and find a way where teaching is valued at an equal level as research, we will have to establish a new set of standards which could build on (perhaps only some of – and perhaps more than) the following requirements:

- It should build on the principles of quality education and quality assurance as lined out in the ETUCE policy paper on the subject,
- It should build on planning, preparation and reflection on improvements, on pedagogical methods and connection to research,
- It should respect academic freedom and include conditions for continuous professional development, paid (in both time and money) by the employer,
- It should not be simple evaluations by the students,
- It should not be another request for documenting the teaching activities on top of all the already existing requirements,
- It should be driven on a collegial basis and not by outside evaluators, but peers from outside will have a role, just like assessment of research publications,
- It should



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The list above is illustrating the problem, as no one yet has been able to establish a comprehensive system for the purpose of improving the importance of teaching activities in the general academic career.

It is the hope that the workshop will be able to come closer to a useful conclusion on how to bring the debate about quality teaching in higher education forward.

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