

Understanding the impact of Applaud on learning and teaching across the Open University

PRAXIS Priority - Enhance employability, career progression and impact on practice

BACKGROUND

The Applaud scheme offers OU staff members the opportunity to receive external recognition as a fellow of the Higher Education Academy (Advance HE). It is also re-accredited every 4 years by the Advance HE.

Little is currently known about the impact of Applaud from the perspectives of OU colleagues who undertake the process. Roberts and McLachlan (2018) evaluated the previous scheme (OpenPAD) and focused on the AL perceptions. Spowart et al. (2020) argue that a greater exploration of the impact of institutional schemes is required.

We sought to review the previous scheme from 2016-2020 to explore impacts and changes to be made for the 2020-2024 Applaud scheme.

Aim: To explore the impact of Applaud on learning, teaching and scholarship at the Open University

Research Questions:

1. What are the experiences of staff who have completed the Applaud scheme?
2. What practical improvements are suggested based upon staff experiences of the scheme?

Methods

- Survey with Applaud Applicants (n=108)
- Semi-structured interviews with 14 applicants (n=3 from WELS)
- Thematic Analysis using deductive and inductive coding using NVivo

Recommendations

- Cohort system with structured time and support for applications
- Increased workshops to support guidance.
- Direct to colleagues who are seeking career development opportunities
- Update guidance and highlight the benefits for colleagues in terms of scholarship.

References

Roberts, J. & McLachlan, J. (2018). Integrated and situated academic development for all categories of staff: Lessons for constructive alignment from an HEA-accredited Continuing Professional Development scheme. *Practice and Evidence of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, 13(1) pp. 49–73.

Spowart, L., Turner, R., & Dismore, H. (2020). Assessing the impact of accreditation on institutions. Advance HE report. Available at: <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/assessing-impact-accreditation-institutions>

FINDINGS

Applaud had impact on colleagues **undertaking scholarship activities** and exploration of scholarship literature.

Applaud had impact on colleague's **professional development** in different ways, such as through being a mentor for others and working in teams.

Offered **an opportunity to reflect on practice** and support capacity building and self-confidence.

Applaud's **impact on student experience** depending on the interviewees' job role.

Facilitated **career development** i.e. through promotion or gaining a permanent position.

Challenges of the scheme include time and Applaud guidance.