

Best Practice Guidelines on the Curriculum Development Evaluation, Reward and Promotion of Teaching Excellence, including Doctoral Supervision

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E-NOTE INTELLECTUAL OUTPUT 3

1

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary

1. Introduction
2. Methodology
3. Best Practices of Teaching & Doctoral Supervision Evaluation
4. Best Practices of Rewarding Schemes
5. Best Practices of Qualification Schemes
6. Concluding Remarks
6. References

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Qualification, awards and training aiming at teaching excellence are a fundamental dimension of the overall reflection and discussion of best practices to improve ways of doing. Three main points seem relevant from the discussion. First, the diverse University systems and practices in place provide room for innovation and creative thinking, might even be inspiring, but are not directly replicable everywhere, meaning the proposal of best practices should always be taken as flexible and adjustable to different realities. Second, teaching excellence best practices need to focus on different dimensions, from the professor to the student to the institutional environment; thus, rewarding schemes and training programmes might be essential as providers of motivation, recognition and further specialisation, but cannot be read in isolation from the broader context in which teaching and supervision practices take place and are implemented. And third, despite efforts developed for improving practices in assessing performance and skills, in rewarding career-paths, in innovative training pedagogical and methodological techniques, the supervision dimension is probably the one that has received least attention, as rendered visible from the literature.

Table 1. Overview of the Best Practices Guidelines

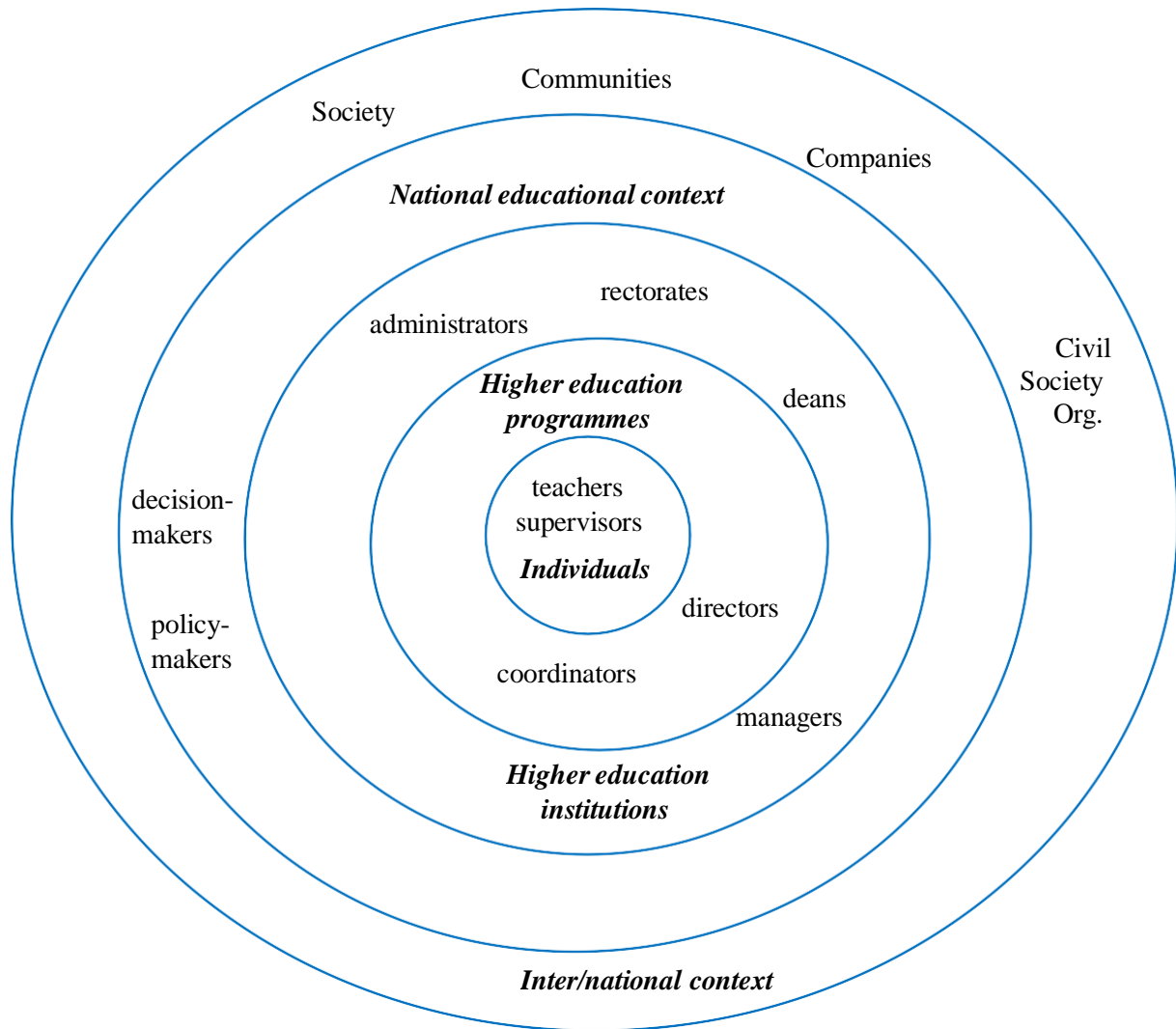
	Best Practice Guideline	Level	Best Practice examples
3. Best practices of teaching and doctoral supervision evaluation	1 – Accreditation Institutions	National	#1 Denmark (DAI); #2 Portugal (A3ES)
		University	#1 Denmark, Copenhagen
	2 – Teaching assessment	University	#1 Coimbra (survey)
		Faculty/Department	#1 Copenhagen (dialogue-based)
4. Best practices of rewarding schemes	3 – Inclusion in career promotion schemes	National	#1 The Netherlands (BKO); #2 Portugal (assessment); #3 Norway (merit system)
		University	#1 Copenhagen (portfolio); #2 Leiden (portfolio)
	4 – Awards/Prizes - Teaching	International	#1 APSA; #2 International Higher Education Teaching Award
		National	#1 Czechia; #2 Denmark; #3 UK
		University	#1 Coimbra; #2; #4 Graz; #3 Copenhagen; #4 Utrecht
		Faculty/Department	#1 FEUC (Coimbra)
	4 – Awards/Prizes - Doctoral Supervision	National	#1 UK
		University	#1 Graz; #2 Southern University Denmark; #3 Durham
	5 – Teaching Academies and other funding schemes	National	#1 Norway
		University	#1 Leiden; #2 Lund
5. Best Practices of qualifying schemes	6 – qualifying schemes	National	#1 BKO Netherlands; #2 Denmark
		University/Faculty	#1 TLHEP Copenhagen
	7 - training	European	#1 Erasmus+ MODEST
		Faculty/Department	#1 IST Lisboa; #2 Durham
	8 – building communities of practice	University	#1 Utrecht (TAUU); #2 Coimbra (UC_DocênciaLABS)

1. INTRODUCTION

The European Network on Teaching Excellence (E-NOTE) is focused on contributing to the creation of a European Education Area through a European approach to promoting and rewarding teaching excellence, including doctoral supervision, across higher education institutions (HEI). The reality is that higher education training remains fragmented and the recognition of higher education teaching qualification schemes for university still lack consistency at the European level. These ‘Best Practices Guidelines’ are based on examples that the E-NOTE Consortium identified amongst the four participating universities – [Leiden University](#), [University of Coimbra](#), [University of Copenhagen](#) and the [Charles University of Prague](#) – as well as universities that are part of the [Coimbra Group](#) (also a E-NOTE partner) as case studies that are worth sharing. Taken together, the examples presented in this report contributed to debates that promoted a mapping exercise conducted by all E-NOTE partners, including the [Global Governance Institute](#). In addition, these best practices guidelines draw on participant feedback from two E-NOTE trainings, focus groups’ input and feedback from E-NOTE Advisory Board. These guidelines are structurally defined by two contested concepts: ‘teaching and doctoral supervision excellence’ and ‘best practices’. Regarding ‘teaching and doctoral supervision excellence’, on the one hand, we want to address teaching and doctoral supervision practices above the effectiveness level, i.e. teaching and doctoral supervision practices that go beyond the everyday teaching and doctoral supervision expectations, involving, for instance, the promotion of authentic relations (Deem and Barid 2020) or pedagogical leadership (Dransfield 2022). These practices engage the full teaching-learning-researching dynamics and centred on student learning outcomes, understood as more than knowledge acquisition, including also cross-cutting skills achievement (e.g. self-confidence, time-management). On the other hand, critics consider the term as somewhat elitist, precluding the possibility for all teaching and doctoral supervision to be excellent. **E-NOTE views teaching and doctoral supervision excellence as an umbrella term that refers to higher education institutions’ policies and frameworks and individual instructors’ approaches that advance student learning and development (and their societal context) in a superior/highly successful/highly effective manner.** By ‘excellent’ we mean policies (at national, university, faculty, department, or programme levels), practices (or “practical examples” (de Groot and Kouwenaar 2018, p. 13) and outcomes that can be regarded as examples that are held in high regard by students, teachers, alumni, managers and/or quality assurance bodies – or indeed by independent researchers. “Teaching Excellence” is thus not a rigid term, but in many cases the expression of an ambition to strive towards better and impactful teaching and doctoral supervision policies, practices and outcomes.¹ This also refers to the idea of self-growth in terms of knowledge, skills and confidence for both the doctoral student and supervisor. Therefore, E-NOTE considers that excellence needs to be addressed at different levels and indifferent, although interconnected, contexts (Figure 1): national (policies), institutional (higher education institutions, faculties and departments) and individual (teachers/supervisors/doctoral students) (Elton, 1998).

¹ For more information on E-NOTE’s approach to teaching and doctoral supervision excellence, see IO1.]

Figure 1 – Teaching and Doctoral Supervision Excellence Ecosystem



But how do we know what to do to be excellent? Identifying best practices guidelines for teaching and doctoral supervision constitutes a contribution for this effort. The term ‘best practices’ is also a contested concept, since it seems to promote a standardisation of practices (Francis and Holloway 2007) and to prescribe a ready-made checklist of procedures without taking into account the disciplinary, institutional and cultural diversity within which teaching and doctoral supervision unfolds. ‘Best Practices’ is a term that has been used across topics and disciplines, but has a clear institutional framework, within which processes and practices are to be improved.

From management (Francis and Holloway 2007) to health care (Frampton and Charnel 2008) including computer software development (Ambler and Lines 2012), ‘best practices’ are identified and applied as “practices that ‘work’ and have consistently been shown to be superior” (Brondyk and Searby 2013, p. 196).

When applying the concept of ‘best practices’ to that of ‘teaching and doctoral supervision excellence’, two main discourses can be found. One that acknowledges the importance of recognising and rewarding teaching and doctoral supervision excellence and therefore also training for excellence and creating the institutional conditions to promoting and sustaining excellence. And another one that is highly critical, which is considering the issue a “part of performance management and measurements” adopted by the organisational structures at universities (Gunn and Fisk 2013, p. 14).

E-NOTE is aware of these debates and understands ‘Best Practices’ as inspiring practices that should:

- ★ **be innovative,**
- ★ **make a difference,**
- ★ **have a sustainable effect and**
- ★ **have the potential to be replicated and to serve as an inspiring model for generating initiatives elsewhere** (UNESCO, n.d.).

Additionally, the fast and continuously changing higher education environments, due to technological developments, but also to evolving student profiles and shifting socio- economic contexts requires us to identify best practices that are deemed adequate, adjustable, to the diverse new social realities and contexts of uncertainty and high complexity. We acknowledge that there is no ‘one size fits all’ formula or model to evaluate and assess teaching excellence, training or rewarding, but there are examples that can be used as inspirational for each distinct national context, for each higher education institution (faculty and/or department), as well as for each teacher and supervisor across Europe and beyond.

The Bologna Process’ footprints at the national level in several European Union countries are also part of these changing processes in higher education, including regulations that require regular institutional audits, ensuring that all universities have a quality assurance system in place that is regular and predictable - with clear rules and criteria. Nevertheless, some countries are still developing their assessment and accreditation frameworks which reflection might benefit from these best practices guidelines.

Finally, it is also important to understand how excellence and best practices are being used in these Guidelines, in the sense that one needs to ask for whom or for what purpose are these best practice guidelines for teaching and doctoral supervision excellence. Many times, one can get lost in the accounting-measurement process and forget that the focus of discussing teaching and doctoral supervision excellence and of identifying best practices guidelines is to improve learning outcomes. Therefore, these should be student-centred practices and processes. The best practices guidelines here presented should be read as flexible, focused on achieving excellence, ensuring student learning and knowledge creation.

2. METHODOLOGY

These Guidelines result from literature review, formal research, collaborative inquiry and practice and experience of teachers and supervisors from E-NOTE institutions.

The literature review was conducted based on desk research of scientific texts, institutional documents and institutions' websites, always focused on best practices identification, in particular looking at teaching evaluation, rewarding and promotion, and training and qualification schemes in Czechia, Denmark, the Netherlands and Portugal, as well as across and beyond Europe, following a snowball approach from literature references and institutional documents. It should be noted that for the purpose of this report we focused on best practices drawn from the E-NOTE Consortium.

Formal research included the organisation of three focus groups online by the University of Coimbra E-NOTE team, involving institutional representatives from Pedagogical Councils, teaching staff and students. Focus group 1 took place on June 18, 2021 involving institutional representatives from Faculties' Pedagogical Councils, as well as award applicants and winners of the University of Coimbra Teaching Innovation Award. The overall objective of this focus group was to create a space for colleagues to share their experiences and ideas on pedagogical innovation projects at the different teaching cycles, including PhD supervision. Specifically, three aspects guided the discussion: personal and professional motivations that led to their pedagogical innovation development, best practices identification and how these best practices relate to teaching excellence promotion. Focus groups 2 and 3 took place on November 9, 2021. Focus group 2 included teaching staff from various Portuguese HEI and the discussion was directed at teaching excellence best practices, how these can be promoted and trained for, and its relation with rewarding and career promotion. Focus group 3 included University of Coimbra students from different study cycles. The discussion was centred on teaching excellence best practices and specific skills recognised by students as teaching excellence.

At the University of Copenhagen best practices concerning evaluation, rewarding and qualification schemes as a point of departure were elaborated in four individual interviews with one head of studies, one responsible for the overall accreditation of the study programmes and two pedagogical consultants involved in teacher training and training of PhD supervisors. In addition, correspondence with other resource persons in Denmark is part of the data.

Collaborative inquiry was also developed within the Coimbra Group E-NOTE internal group of experts composed by representatives of five member universities from the Coimbra Group and within the E-NOTE Learning, Teaching and Training Activities that took place online on January 10-14 and June 20-24, 2022.

Practices and experiences of teachers and supervisors were identified from the above- mentioned information collection methods with a special focus on the E-NOTE team members' practices, experiences and knowledge and with the support of students' panels and a doctoral candidates' survey.

3. Best practices of Teaching and Doctoral Supervision Evaluation

The structural best practice regarding teaching and doctoral supervision excellence evaluation is that it should exist. Of course, one should consider, when creating or engaging in such practice, the purpose of evaluation, the object of evaluation, the evaluators, the timing of evaluation, the means and criteria of evaluation, and then how do we follow up on the results. This is a reflection that is extremely important to develop as a basis for creating and engaging in teaching and doctoral supervision evaluation processes, so that expectations do not become defrauded. E-NOTE understands evaluation as a means to promote excellence, by identifying areas, which have the potential to strive for excellence in terms of student learning, and to recognise and reward excellence in order to spread out its potential. There is a consensus that teaching and doctoral supervision excellence evaluation should be **regular, predictable** and include **clear rules and criteria**. Teaching and doctoral supervision excellence evaluation can be part of institutional, programme and/or individual/groups of individuals' assessment processes.

3.1 Best Practice Guideline 1 – Accreditation Institutions

National Level

#1 Denmark: The Danish Accreditation Institute (DAI)

The [Danish Accreditation Institute](#) (DAI) conducts regular institutional audits (every sixth year) in order to accredit higher education teaching programmes in Denmark. Assessment results may lead to an approval, a conditional approval or a rejection decision. The Danish national accreditation system aims to increase the academic quality and relevance of university programmes. An accreditation report should document the programmes' demand and relevance and must include a number of key figures illustrating graduates' unemployment, completion and student attrition, research publications, full-time academic staff/part-time academic staff ratio and student/full-time academic staff ratio, as well as document the existence of an internal quality assurance system. The final assessment is based on an evaluation by a panel that includes both figures and text answers. It is difficult to make any quality assurance standards explicit; however, the overall driver is the University Act and other legal frameworks as well as an evaluation of the learning goals, completion rates, unemployment and so on. These are not factors that the universities have sole influence. DAI definitely ensures regular, predictable evaluations within a frame of clear rules and criteria. However, challenges may arise with more centralised steering, including control and measurement (NPM) overruling values and 'personal development' (Hermann et al 2016); with the whole process requiring extensive resources; and with the fact that measuring for example the student/full-time academic staff ratio does not necessarily equal quality.

#2 Portugal: Agency for Assessment and Accreditation of Higher Education

The [Agency for Assessment and Accreditation of Higher Education](#) (A3ES) accredits the quality assurance frameworks of higher education institutions, thus confirming the quality and adequacy of the existing quality assurance mechanisms. The Agency is a private law foundation, established for an indeterminate period of time, with legal status, and recognised as being a public utility. It is independent in its decisions, although it must take into account the guidelines prescribed by the Government. The mandate of the Portuguese Agency is to assist in the process of “improving the quality of Portuguese higher education, through the assessment and accreditation of higher education institutions and their study programmes, and to ensure the integration of Portugal in the European quality assurance system of higher education” (A3ES n.d.). This assessment is based on each institution’s performance and results. Regarding performance, the criteria include the scientific level of teaching, teaching and learning methodologies and students’ evaluation processes; teaching staff qualifications and adequacy to the institution’s mission; and the strategy adopted to guarantee teaching quality and the way it is accomplished, among others. Regarding results, the criteria include academic success or students’ integration, among several others targeting the institution’s social, economic and cultural impact. The Portuguese National Agency ensures regular and clearly defined criteria for evaluation, creating an expected framework for HEI to work with, and aims at continuous improvement measures.

The Portuguese Agency for Assessment and Accreditation of Higher Education

- accredits the quality assurance frameworks of higher education institutions;
- confirms the quality and adequacy of the existing quality assurance mechanisms;
- assesses 1) scientific level of teaching, teaching and learning methodologies, students’ evaluation processes; 2) teaching staff qualifications, adequacy to the institution’s mission; 3) strategy to guarantee teaching quality;
- aims at continuous improvement measures.

University level

#1 Denmark: University of Copenhagen

Danish universities base the design of their quality assurance system on Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area and the Danish Accreditation Institution’s guidelines² [The universities need to have a quality assurance system in place and they should go public with the results. For

² [untitled \(enqa.eu\)](#) and [Akkreditering i Danmark - Danmarks Akkrediteringsinstitution](#).

example, the University of Copenhagen, as an institution, conducts systematically different types of evaluations, such as evaluation of study programmes (every sixth year), graduate surveys (every third year), study environment (every second or third year) and course evaluations (every semester). The other universities conduct evaluations within the same themes, however, the forms and methods in use differ. These create a regular and predictable assessment environment with clear rules and criteria.

3.2 Best Practice Guideline 2 – teaching assessment

University level

#1 Portugal: University of Coimbra

Portuguese universities are required to assess teaching staff and students' pedagogical performance and results. This is achieved by a survey applied to each curricular unit offered. The criteria include teaching methodologies, scientific knowledge, transfer skills, readings and pedagogical materials made available, as well as evaluation methods adopted. Surveys also include a qualitative field where students can reflect on the teaching-learning process overall. Teaching staff surveys relate mainly to the assessment of each curricular unit taught, including the identification of strengths, weaknesses and dimensions to be improved.

At the University of Coimbra the teaching and learning survey for BA and MA students is composed of 15 items requiring quantitative answers and evaluating three main dimensions, each with a summary question (Alarcão *et al* 2020, p. 96). The dimensions are:

1. curricular units (adequacy of workload, appreciation of the quality of learning, adjustment of theoretical/practical issues, perception about the development of analysis and critical skills);
2. operating conditions of the study programme (adequacy of classrooms and other facilities, library, software and other resources);
3. teachers' performance (clarity in the subjects taught, promotion of student self-learning, global evaluation of the teacher quality). (Alarcão *et al* 2020, p. 97)

This teaching assessment process envisages to ensure 'high quality' in terms of scientific knowledge and pedagogical performance. It allows the identification of problems associated with any of the items described above and defines procedures to overcome these, contributing to a continuous improvement-oriented system.

Regarding doctoral programmes, the University of Coimbra applies two surveys: one once the coursework is completed (Moment A) and another one after the submission of the thesis (Moment B). Moment A is geared towards first year doctoral candidates and includes four dimensions: training and research support; training and research activities; teaching staff and coordinators' performance; and doctoral supervisors' performance.

Moment B targets doctoral candidates who have already submitted their thesis and addresses five dimensions: programme's organisation, infrastructure and environment; training quality; teaching staff performance; doctoral supervisors' performance; and institution's support regarding scientific production and international mobility. It also includes a couple of questions regarding their thesis, one of them focused on any existing delays or issues of relevance to explain their doctoral studies' path. This practice of feedback from doctoral students has revealed fundamental to assure better quality performance and to reflect on mechanisms to overcome identified difficulties, in their different dimensions.

Department/Faculty level

#1 Denmark: Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences, University of Copenhagen

An example for inspiration can be found at the Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences at the University of Copenhagen. The overall "objective of the evaluation is to enhance student learning and teaching outcomes within the given frameworks."³ The study board can choose between a survey-model or a **dialogue-based approach**. The dialogue-based approach is highly valued. Firstly, evaluation meetings are scheduled in advance, i.e., the students meet without their teacher. They have a co-student that runs the meeting and summarises all inputs. Secondly, the student representatives from all courses meet and create a common presentation, i.e., no one, either students or courses, are singled out. The students' representatives meet with the teachers and course organisers and discuss the teaching. At the meeting, they mostly come up with relevant solutions in case challenges need to be handled. This form of evaluation ensures student engagement and constructive dialogues with teachers and contributes to quality assurance (Kurtzhals 2022).

Dialogue-based course evaluation

- enhances student learning and teaching outcomes;
- consists of evaluation meetings scheduled in advance;
- involves students' meetings and creating common presentation;
- entails meetings with teachers to discuss teaching quality and improvements

³ [Procedure for Programme evaluations \(ku.dk\)](#), p. 1

4. Best Practices of Rewarding Schemes

Teaching and doctoral supervision excellence depends not only on the commitment, skills and implementation at the level of the individual higher education teacher (or group of teachers), but it also requires a strong teaching excellence culture at the institutional (i.e. department, faculty and university), national and, increasingly, also European and international levels. Excellent teachers and supervisors require an environment that celebrates, values and rewards high quality teaching and doctoral supervision. The literature on teaching and doctoral supervision excellence has stressed for decades that this means that universities and university leadership must enable clear promotion paths and career trajectories for faculty members who dedicate their expertise to teaching and doctoral supervision excellence. However, in many contexts rewarding teaching and doctoral supervision excellence is still an ad-hoc decision of teaching institutions and/or national ministries. Still, one can find examples of regional and international awards and prizes, as well as some by national or international scientific and professional associations. Overall, it is agreed **that teaching and doctoral supervision excellence rewarding schemes should be adopted and implemented, including formalisation in career promotion schemes.**

Rewarding teaching and doctoral supervision excellence should be embedded in teaching staff career promotion, but this only occurs in some countries, such as Denmark or the Netherlands. In others, there might be general references and recommendations but without a clear, predictable and encompassing approach, such as in Portugal or Czechia.

4.1 Best Practice Guideline 3 – Inclusion of teaching and doctoral supervision excellence in career promotion schemes

National Level

#1 The Netherlands: the Basiskwalificatie Onderwijs (Basic Teaching Qualification)

The [Basiskwalificatie Onderwijs](#) (BKO) was created between all Dutch universities in 2008 in order to provide a shared approach to establishing basic standards and qualifications for teaching in higher education. All 14 Dutch universities⁴ signed an agreement to implement the BKO scheme in their universities and, crucially important, to mutually recognise the BKO certificates of each other. In all Dutch universities that are part of the BKO scheme, lecturers must acquire the certificate within the first two years of their contract or risk that their contract will not be extended. In this way, the teaching qualification scheme is closely linked to the universities' human resources policies and forms a hard requirement for career progression or even basic contract renewal.

⁴ The 14 Universities in the Netherlands are Erasmus University Rotterdam, the Free University of Amsterdam (VU), Open University, Radboud University Nijmegen, Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, Tilburg University, Technical University Delft, Technical University Eindhoven, University of Amsterdam, Leiden University, University of Maastricht, University of Twente, University of Utrecht, and University of Wageningen.

#2 Portugal: Teaching Staff Performance Assessment

There are two ways to progress in Portuguese academic career: by salary increases within the same category, or by changing categories (Assistant to Associate to Full Professor, and at any of these they can obtain Agregação). The salary increases within the same category results from the teaching staff performance assessment. This performance assessment includes four dimensions: scientific, teaching, knowledge transfer and management⁵. These dimensions are the same for all Portuguese higher education institutions, but their weight may vary depending on each university ruling. In terms of teaching assessment, for instance, at the University of Minho (2015), it ranges between 30 and 45%, at the University of Algarve it can reach 60% (Despacho 4319/2019), and, at Nova University Lisbon, it ranges between 20 and 70% (Diário da República 2010). Each School/Faculty is then free to identify the exact weight they adopt for the assessment of their own teaching staff, including according to the various scientific areas. For example, at ISCSP, this weight also varies according to the professional category (full professor, 25%; associate professor, 35%; assistant professor, 45%) (Despacho 5311/2007). Some universities have adopted a qualitative approach, in which each dimension is measured autonomously and provides a qualitative assessment of excellent, very good, good or not relevant. They then define a combination of dimension/qualitative assessment to calculate the overall teaching staff assessment. For instance, at the University of Coimbra to obtain an overall excellent performance assessment, one needs to obtain excellent in research, at least very good in teaching, despite the assessment in the other two dimensions; or, one needs to obtain excellent in research, good in teaching, at least a very good in one of the other dimensions and none not relevant (Regulamento 398/2010). When progressing between professional categories, each application states, again, the specific weight given to teaching, ranging, for instance, at the University of Coimbra, between 30% and 40%. This regular assessment of teaching staff, usually every three years, constitutes a monitoring and motivational tool for the development of competencies in all four areas identified, with the goals of consolidating career-progress prospects. It also provides guidance in terms of what is considered most relevant for a successful academic career allowing self-orientation.

#3 Norway: Pedagogical Merit System

As part of the Norwegian Government's quality initiative as expressed in the White Paper Quality Culture in Higher Education (2016-2017), by 2019 Norwegian higher education institutions were required to have pedagogical merit systems to encourage teaching initiatives and to reward educational development work. Merit systems promote education quality by remunerating academic employees according to documented results. One of the goals of this scheme is to raise the status of educational activity and place greater value on teaching competence. The applicant's competence is assessed by committees with internal and external experts. Various types of reward

⁵ See <https://www.uc.pt/fpce/normas/docentes/avd/Regulamento>.

could be linked to the individual merit, such as salary increases, grants and project funds for the institute or membership in educational academies.

University level

#1 Denmark: University of Copenhagen

The University of Copenhagen has recently launched a promotion scheme illustrating how merit is recognised. It describes the minimum, i.e., “admission or entrance criteria for a job category” standards for performance and development for the three main categories of university positions (Assistant, Associate and Full professor) in relation to research, teaching, societal impact, organisational contribution, external funding and leadership.⁶

The framework supports the process of making criteria for promotion more visible for both individuals, departments and universities as such. However, in practice, it is still a matter of formalising and ensuring that teaching and research to a larger extent is recognized on equal footing. For example, it is up to each of the universities to decide how the demand on ongoing development of pedagogical competencies should look like. Thinking of the resistance that still occurs among senior staff when they have to participate in a two days PhD supervisor course, it might be a challenge to implement. The University of Copenhagen supports the development of pedagogical competencies and hereby the possibility of promotion in two ways. Firstly, all faculties have at least one Teaching and Learning in Higher Education Programme for inexperienced teachers that takes up a position as Assistant Professor, postdoc or tenure, as well as foreigners without a teaching certificate. These courses have run for several years, since it became mandatory to get pedagogical training in 1984 (Job Order). The other universities in Denmark run similar courses. In general, the courses get good feedback. Secondly, the University also has a Pedagogical Competence Profile with similar elements as in the Danish Framework for Advancing University Pedagogy: areas of responsibility; knowledge sharing and peer supervision; knowledge of learning, teaching and the study programme; practice and reflection; training in the pedagogy of university teaching; pedagogical development projects; and a BASIS consisting of academic qualifications and knowledge of the subject.⁷ This profile supports the creation and maintenance of the mandatory teaching portfolio due to the demand on ongoing development of all academic pedagogical competencies. Recently (fall 2022) the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Copenhagen has decided that all members of faculty should participate in collegial supervision in order to develop their pedagogical competencies.

#2 The Netherlands: Leiden University

⁶ See <https://employment.ku.dk/faculty/criteria-for-recognising-merit/>.

⁷ See https://employment.ku.dk/faculty/recruitment-process/job-application-portfolio/KUs_p_dagogiske_kompetenceprofil_31_10_UK.pdf

At Leiden University, the attainment of a BKO certificate⁸ relies heavily on the submission of a written “portfolio of evidence” and reflection. This means, for example, that a BKO can be attained on the basis of self-reflection, student evaluations and an assessment by the supervisor, but essentially without an actual class-room visit, peer-review or video evidence.

4.2 Best Practice Guideline 4 – Teaching and Doctoral Supervision Excellence Awards/Prizes

Awarding prizes for teaching and doctoral supervision excellence can be materialised through financial support, teaching leaves or public recognition. Some countries, such as Denmark or Czechia, have national prizes/awards, others have them at the university, faculty and/or departmental level, such as in Portugal. In some countries, there are awards/prizes at all levels – faculty, university and national – reinforcing the promotion of a teaching and doctoral supervision excellence culture, such as in Denmark. The institutional candidates constitute the channel to be nominated to the national ones, promoting an articulation among the different levels and, therefore, promoting and reinforcing the recognition of teaching and doctoral supervision excellence. There are also some international awards/prizes from international scientific and professional associations, as well as from charities. Both from the literature and from the examples analysed, it becomes clear that these awards/prizes, in order to promote a teaching and doctoral supervision excellence culture should be clear, regular and predictable, thus requiring specific and predefined regulations. Criteria varies, as shown by the different examples provided below, but they usually include innovation, motivating relation with students, commitment and attitude, among others. This practice also has received some criticism, highlighting the competitiveness and individualistic elements (marketization) of the procedure (Macfarlane 2022). It is important, therefore, to identify the best matching elements for the context in which awards/prizes may be created to overcome some of these

⁸ See https://www.vsnu.nl/en_GB/utq.

TEACHING EXCELLENCE AWARDS AND PRIZES

International level

#1 American Political Science Association: [APSA Teaching Awards](#)

APSA confers three different Teaching Awards. The APSA Campus Teaching Award Recognition consists of recognising political science faculty who have received teaching awards from their own colleges or universities during the past academic year. The winners and titles of their awards are then featured in the August issue of Political Science Today.

The APSA Distinguished Teaching Award honours outstanding contributions to undergraduate and graduate teaching of political science at two- and four-year higher education institutions. The award was created to signal the central role of teaching in the profession. The award is presented at the APSA Annual Meeting and carries a cash prize of 1,000 USD. Contributions eligible for this award may span several years or an entire career, or it may be a single project of exceptional impact.

And the APSA Community College Faculty Award is given to a person or persons who have made exemplary contributions to advance the multi-faceted goals of community college faculty. The award identifies the contributions of faculty in terms of innovation, creativity, promoting equity in mentorship, advancing civic and community engagement, participating in institutional shared governance, and/or promoting research.

Any political science faculty in the world is eligible to all of these awards.

#2 International Higher Education Teaching Award

PROFFORMANCE, Austria, Croatia, Czechia, Georgia, Hungary and Serbia

The purpose of this award is to identify, acknowledge and recognise excellent teaching practices – student-centred course design, innovative teaching and learning, students' learning assessment, or impact and mission with and for society – and to provide opportunities not only for sharing and exchanging best examples, but also to encourage cooperation between the Higher Education Institutions of the European Higher Education Area, through digitalisation, internationalisation, inclusion and diversity, and sustainability.

National level

#1 Czechia: [National Prize for Outstanding University Teachers](#)

Minister of Education, Youth and Sport

The objective of the award is to highlight the importance of quality higher education, recognise outstanding university teachers and promote the exchange of good practices. The award itself consists in a diploma and a

monetary prize worth up to 100,000 CZK (around 4,000€). Every year, a maximum of five awards are distributed nationally. The award scheme is nomination-based, meaning that university rectors, deans of faculties and student members of the university academic senates may nominate one person by filling-in a form in which they explain the reasons why the candidate should be considered for the award, providing evidence for this effect. In their decision, the award panel takes in account four main criteria: innovation, attitude, pedagogical knowledge and contribution to the teaching profession.

#2 Denmark: **National Teaching Award**

Ministry of Higher Education and Science

The Danish Ministry of Higher Education and Science launched a national Teaching Award in 2019. The aim is to attract attention to the teacher role and provide role models for excellent teaching at all levels of higher education in Denmark. Two university teachers receive the prize – 500,000 DKK (67,350€) of which 200,000 DKK (27,350 €) is for the person/team and 300,000 DKK (40,000€) is for development of excellent teaching at the department/ institution. Each University can nominate candidates for the National Teaching Award among the teachers nominated for the university's own teaching award. Students' perspectives are also taken into account in the nomination process. Teachers/ teaching teams should fulfil the following criteria: inspiring teaching, feedback to students, teaching innovation and quality development, sharing of experience with colleagues, and ensuring practical relevance. The person nominating is free to select an additional, sixth criterion of their own choice.

#3 United Kingdom: **Teaching Excellence Awards**

Advance HE

Advance HE is a member-led, sector-owned charity that works with institutions and higher education across the world to improve higher education for staff, students and society. The National Teaching Fellowship (NTFS) recognises and rewards individual members of staff who can clearly demonstrate having an outstanding impact on student outcomes and the teaching profession. Fellows must demonstrate evidence in individual excellence, raising the profile of excellence and developing excellence. The Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence (CATE) recognises and rewards the key role that teamwork plays in enhancing teaching and learning through collaborative approaches in higher education. This could have an impact on colleagues and/or students at an institutional or discipline level. Both awards are open to all Higher Education Providers (HEPs) across the four nations of the UK, including Further Education Colleges and independent 'alternative' providers. In order to

participate, institutions must be Advance HE Full or Affiliate members and based in the UK.

Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence

- recognises and rewards the key role that teamwork plays in enhancing teaching and learning through collaborative approaches in education;
- could have an impact on colleagues and/or students at an institutional or discipline level.

University level

#1 Portugal: **Pedagogical Innovation Awards**

University of Coimbra

The University of Coimbra has created two Pedagogical Innovation Awards to “stimulate their teachers”. The ‘Pedagogical Innovation 4UC’ Award aims at stimulating, promoting and supporting, throughout the academic year of the Award, the development of the selected project with capacity to be disseminated and replicated across the University. The ‘Pedagogical Innovation @UC’ Award aims at rewarding innovative activities and practices that have already been implemented. Each year, up to five projects are awarded 1,000€ each. The projects are judged based on the following criteria: innovation, potential impact of transforming teaching-learning practices, replication potential, and projects articulated with the United Nations Agenda 2030 are appreciated.

#2 Austria: **Preis für exzellente Lehre (Prize for Excellence in Teaching)**

Graz University of Technology

The Prize for Excellence in Teaching is awarded every two years to a maximum of three teachers. The prize winners are awarded 2,000€ each and are also nominated for the Ars docendi National Prize for Excellence in Teaching at Public Universities. In addition, the prize is also awarded to a maximum of three teachers in the category ‘young teachers’. The criteria includes an outstanding level of commitment, an excellent didactic concept and, above all, success in motivating their students.

#3 Denmark: **Teacher of the Year Award**

University of Copenhagen

In Denmark, all universities have Teaching Awards. The criteria in use vary from university to university. These include development of new teaching methods and teaching that supports student learning and communicative skills. The type of award varies as well. The University of Copenhagen’s Teaching Award is for high-quality

teaching and the nominations are based on criteria 1-5 of the National Teaching Award, whereas the sixth criterion focuses on how the teachers include their own research in teaching. The University nominates two of the 'local' nominees for the following year's National Teaching Award competition. The University of Copenhagen wishes to highlight and appreciate high-quality university teaching. The winner receives a porcelain owl and 25,000 DKK (3,360€). There is an interview with the prize winner at the universities' webpage as well as in the university's newspaper/channels. Besides, it seems to be more random how the winner's experience is shared with a wider public. As suggested by Seppala & Smith

To increase the potential for teaching awards to contribute to the wider improvement of university teaching, we recommend that teaching award schemes should be linked to a broader suite of practices aimed at instilling a culture which values teaching and learning enhancement, including departmental meetings, learning and teaching events, workshops and mentoring. When awards are announced within this context, they can increase faculty interest in learning and education events. In order to encourage sharing, we propose that there should be higher numbers of awards that reward team teaching, mentoring, or knowledge sharing over awards which recognize individuals. (2020, 1409)

#4 The Netherlands: Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

Utrecht University

The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) is an academic activity that can be positioned between teaching and research: approaching your teaching scientifically to improve teaching and develop yourself as a teacher. The purpose of SoTL is to give teachers insight into student learning and to develop themselves as teachers. SoTL takes place at the level of the teaching space: teachers examine their own teaching activities. A SoTL project has four basic elements: it draws on previous knowledge (e.g., subject matter didactic or educational science literature); it gathers insight into student learning; it is methodologically well thought through; and it shares results publicly. Preferably, SoTL also involves students. Teachers can apply for a SoTL grant, which helps them research their teaching, for example, by funding data collection or educational science advice. Teachers can apply for projects with a maximum budget of 5,000€. Teachers can also request a professional consultation to discuss their educational research ideas with an educational expert.

Faculty/Department level

#1 Portugal: Prémio FEUC Ensino (Faculty of Economics Teaching Prize)

The Faculty of Economics of the University of Coimbra confers annually a Teaching Prize based on the pedagogical innovation model presented. To be eligible, teaching staff need to have obtained a students'

assessment of at least 4 (out of 5) in that academic year's student evaluation. The award consists of a plaque and 2,500€.

DOCTORAL SUPERVISION EXCELLENCE AWARDS AND PRIZES

National level

#1 United Kingdom: UKCGE National Supervisor Award

Council for Graduate Education

The Outstanding Research Supervisor of the Year is given to the individual who has created the most supportive, stimulating and inspirational research environment for doctoral students. Entries will be accepted from institutions, supervisors themselves or their colleagues, but in all cases the institution must support the submission and student testimonies must be included in the supplementary documentation. Candidates need to demonstrate enthusiasm for the role, flexibility in regard to supervision sessions, and preparedness to go the extra mile to help navigate students through difficulties, be they academic or otherwise; challenge students while encouraging them to contribute something substantial to their specific area of academic discourse; provide additional support and facilities to give greater scope to the PhD, or to enable it to be completed early; to be exceptionally supportive through the planning for assessments and the PhD viva; offer constructive employment and career advice post-graduation.

University level

#1 Austria: Seraphine-Puchleitner-Preis (Seraphine-Puchleitner Award)

University of Graz

This award for outstanding doctoral supervision is named after the first female doctoral graduate of the University of Graz.⁹ Under this rewarding scheme, PhD supervisors are nominated anonymously by one or more of their doctoral candidates and have to submit

a detailed account and explanation of their supervisory strategies and practices. The criteria applied to award this prize are divided into three categories: thesis supervision (providing support for the financing of the research project, availability to discuss and meet, providing adequate methodological and theoretical and subject-specific support, helping with future professional opportunities); teaching (promoting regular participation in seminars, creating conditions for feedback on thesis presentations); and scientific community (supporting participation in conferences, summer schools, among others; providing networking opportunities; supporting publications by and with doctoral supervisees).

#2 Denmark: PhD supervisor of the year

At Aarhus University and Southern University Denmark, PhD students nominate and select the best supervisor of the year. At both universities, it is within Health disciplines.¹⁰ At the Danish Technical University, they hand out a prize for the PhD supervisor of the year. On the other hand, there are prizes for the best PhD paper, best presentations by PhD students and so on. A common thread is that prizewinning supervisors seem to gather the PhD students around them in projects and create a common space.

#3 United Kingdom: Excellence in Research Student Supervision

At the [University of Durham](#), teaching excellence, including doctoral supervision, is recognised and reward through several annual awards. The Excellence in Research Student Supervision recognises individuals who have made an outstanding contribution to supervising and supporting doctoral researchers in their personal, professional and career development through their doctoral studies. Nominations from supervised students are also welcome in this category.

4.3 Best Practice Guideline 5 – Teaching Academies

National level

#1 Norway: National Competitive Funding Scheme

As a response to the Norwegian Government's White Paper Quality Culture in Higher Education (2016-2017), a national competitive funding scheme was established. Among a range of different programmes aimed at higher education, the Programme for student-active learning (up to NOK 5 million – 476,000€ - for three-year period) and Centres for Excellence in Education (up to NOK 40 million – 3.8 million euro - for five- year period) are among the most prestigious schemes. Centres for Excellence in Education is a targeted and long-term effort to stimulate the development of teaching practises and new approaches to learning in higher education – both at bachelor's and master's degree levels. The awarded centres must be in the forefront of national and international developments in education, and centres are expected to instigate change by disseminating knowledge and practices both within and outside their host institution.

University level

#1 The Netherlands: **Teacher's Academy, Leiden University**

The Teachers' Academy at Leiden University⁹ rewards top talents in education and stimulates educational innovation. Teachers who are chosen as Teaching Fellows join the Teachers' Academy, acting as guides and pioneers in renewing education at Leiden University. To this end they are awarded a grant of 25,000€, which they can use to carry out educational innovation projects. Teaching Fellows are inspiring examples for their colleagues and good dialogue partners for the Vice Rector Magnificus and the Education Council in terms of innovation in education.

#2 Sweden: **Teaching Academies, Lund University**

At Lund University, as in several other Swedish HEI, excellent teaching is recognised by appointing engaged and dedicated teachers to a Teaching Academy. The appointees get an increase in their salary apart from the special recognition. Furthermore, at Lund University, the appointee's department gets a bonus as well. These initiatives seem to increase the interest in continuously developing staffs' teaching competence, contributing to the quality of student learning. One of the elements required for applying is a teaching portfolio as well as reflections from colleagues. It takes several years to build this kind of academy. At Lund University, the idea spread from the Faculty of Engineering to the social sciences.¹⁰

⁹ See <https://www.staff.universiteitleiden.nl/human-resources/mobility-and-career-guidance/teacher-professionalisation/teachers-academy>

¹⁰ For Swedish inspiration, see Andersson & Roxå 2004, <https://www.ism.lu.se/en/contact/teaching-academy> and from Finland <https://www.helsinki.fi/en/admissions-and-education/education/teachers-academy>

5. Best Practices of Qualification Schemes

Qualification schemes aim at enhancing teachers' and doctoral supervisors' skills and competencies, and raising their status and their ability to apply for promotions. This entails the need to think about how to develop these schemes, whether the curriculum provides adequate support for training teaching and doctoral supervision excellence, and how awards might reinforce the goal of attaining excellence. Qualification schemes can start small, at a Faculty or Department, or big, at the national level, or somewhere in between, at the university level. Ideally, it would be fully integrated at all levels, so that those qualifications are mutually recognised across levels and within each level, i.e., among departments, faculties, universities, and, ideally, at the European level. There might also be training initiatives, which do not constitute qualifications, but yet still enhance and promote teachers' and doctoral supervisors' skills and competencies. These can start as voluntary in order to promote a teaching and doctoral supervision excellence culture and progress into compulsory qualification schemes, or not. These schemes can also be an entry requirement or exist throughout the academic career for promotion purposes or lifelong learning objectives. One should not lose focus from the purpose of creating and maintaining a qualification or training scheme, besides the career promotion concerns, the result should still be a developmental one, with teaching-learning-researching excellence at the centre of the process.

5.1 Best Practice Guideline 6 – qualification schemes

National level

#1 The Netherlands: Basiskwalificatie Ondwerwijs (University Teaching Qualification)

In the Dutch context, all teachers securing a job at a university – irrespective of their previous teaching experience – are required, as a matter of human resources regulation, to obtain a basic qualification of teaching (the so-called *Basiskwalificatie Ondwerwijs* – BKO).¹¹ The BKO consists of a series of modules, allowing lecturers to assess and develop all facets of teaching. At the end of the programme, you are awarded a BKO certificate. Once you have completed the BKO certification, you are qualified for all Dutch universities. The BKO starts with an interview with the Faculty's BKO contact person, who conducts the interview on behalf of the Faculty's assessment committee. Based on the teacher's teaching experience, the assessment committee decides which learning outcomes they already meet and which they need to develop further. They then have two years to create a portfolio and complete the BKO track. Without the BKO one cannot be appointed on a permanent

¹¹ See <https://www.staff.universiteit leiden.nl/human-resources/mobility-and-career-guidance/teacher-professionalisation/university-teaching-qualification>.

contract or promoted to a higher position. In the portfolio, the teacher has to demonstrate teaching capacities across three core categories: “content-related characteristics”, “assessment-related characteristics” and “process- related characteristics”. The portfolio should include, at least, the following information: student evaluations; their supervisor’s assessment; reflection on their own development as a teacher; and advice from their colleague-mentor (if they follow a training programme). Universities also usually offer training programmes for BKO qualification, including modules such as ‘how to design a course’, ‘teaching in practice’, ‘testing and assessment’, ‘supervising thesis students’, or ‘reflecting on one’s own teaching’. Still, there is variation in the way universities and, sometimes, even faculties **within the same university**, define or emphasise certain teaching quality elements and criteria to be taken into account in one’s BKO programme.

#2 Denmark: Universities Denmark

The Association representing the eight universities in Denmark provides a framework for advancing university pedagogy, specifying, in general terms, what is to be expected of each of the three main categories of university positions (Assistant, Associate and Full Professor and a category of special educational tasks) in relation to developing teaching at the universities. Six elements should be taken into consideration: teaching and supervision of theses, assessment, quality assurance, collaboration with students, collaboration with colleagues, and cooperation of quality assurance. These elements could be seen as minimum standards that teachers should meet. There are no measures, only expectations. An Assistant Professor “can work systematically to develop [their] own teaching and thesis supervision based on teaching evaluations” to ensure quality assurance. An Associate Professor should in addition to this expectation be able to “develop and test new formats for evaluating [their] own teaching and thesis supervision”. This is a tool for inspiration and support in the process of implementing teacher-training activities at all levels. The overall ambition is to align research and teaching.¹²

There is an overall description of the reward and promotion paths in the Danish Job Order. It relates to the three levels of job positions: Assistant Professor, Associate Professor and Full Professor. Furthermore, from January 2021, a teaching portfolio is mandatory if you want to apply for a permanent position. It indicates what a minimum standard concerning teaching should be. In practice, this is a Teaching & Learning Programme Certificate (see below). In addition, ongoing development of pedagogical competencies became mandatory for all academics.

¹² See <https://dkuni.dk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/danish-framework-for-advancing-university-pedagogy-1.pdf>

University/Faculty level

#1 Denmark: Universitetspædagogikum (Teaching and Learning in Higher Education Programme)

University of Copenhagen/Faculty of Social Sciences

The Teaching and Learning in Higher Education Programme (TLHEP) is the compulsory teacher training programme for assistant professors and associate professors employed on a trial basis in order to attain appointment as associate professors.¹³ The aim is to qualify the participants to meet the requirements for the teaching aspect of an associate professorship in a time-effective manner. Although the University of Copenhagen establishes the overall guidelines in accordance with the national Job Structure for academic staff at universities, it is up to each Faculty to take the necessary measures to create and offer a TLHEP.

In the case of the Faculty of Social Sciences, the programme also includes post-docs and is conducted in English. It is a prerequisite for participation in the Programme that the participant has either completed the 3-day PhD Introduction to teaching and supervision Course¹⁶ or has acquired knowledge and skills equivalent hereto in a different way. The Programme is normally undertaken within the first two years of an assistant professorship, and for associate professors employed on a trial basis, it must be completed at the latest four months before the end of the trial period. As soon as possible, after the assistant professor is appointed, a plan is drawn up for specific elements of the TLHEP. The plan is approved by the assistant professor, the supervisors and the head of department. Any changes to the plan must be approved by the same parties. When allocating teaching and other work at the Faculty's departments, the number of working hours devoted to the Teaching and Learning in Higher Education Programme by both assistant professors and supervisors must be taken into account. The TLHEP includes teaching under supervision, including preparation; courses, seminars, workshops, etc., including preparation; and participation in pedagogical development work (if relevant). The program is completed in approximately 175 hours. The key areas of teaching skills are areas of responsibility; knowledge sharing and peer supervision; knowledge of learning, teaching and the study programme; practice and reflection; training in the pedagogy of university teaching; and pedagogical development projects (University of Copenhagen Pedagogical Competence Profile). Successful completion of the TLHEP programme is based on attending at least 80% of training days; handing in all mandatory assignments; engaging in peer supervision and at least 4 formal supervision sessions; handing in a project relevant to the objectives of the programme, handing in an accepted teaching portfolio, and receiving a positive assessment in the supervision report.

¹³ See https://socialsciences.ku.dk/faculty/publications/teacher_training_programme/
https://samf.ku.dk/pes/english/forteachers/tlhe/TLHEP_course_description_2021.pdf.

The teaching portfolio must include material that can be used in future job applications and must, thus, include material that, at a minimum, conforms to the University of Copenhagen's guidelines for teaching portfolios and job applications. The portfolio must also include an overview of completed teaching assignments, evaluation results and the assistant professor's reflections on their own pedagogic work.

Danish TLHEPs across universities are, in most cases, highly valued. Two major elements seem to be of

Danish Teaching and Learning in Higher Education Programmes

- content should be of relevance for the participants;
- participants should be engaged in collegial supervision;
- creates micro cultures that contribute to quality development within teaching and supervision.

importance to obtain success. Firstly, the content should be of relevance for the participants; and secondly, the participants should be engaged in collegial supervision, i.e., in a group of three participants, they visit each other's teaching or supervision and provide feedback. Furthermore, the group serves as a place for starting a conversation about teaching and supervision, becoming a way of creating micro cultures that contribute to quality development within teaching and supervision.¹⁴

5.2 Best Practice Guideline 7 – training

European level

#1 Erasmus+: Modernization of Doctoral Education Science and Improvement of Teaching Methodology (MODEST)

The Erasmus+ project Modernization of Doctoral Education Science and Improvement of Teaching Methodology (MODEST) offers a course guideline for the construction of doctoral training, with modules dedicated to personal development, providing material for reflecting about qualification schemes. The project provides all the information on its website with thematic syllabi with reading and teaching materials, as well as exercises in some topics.

The projects aims

¹⁴ See <https://lucris.lub.lu.se/ws/portalfiles/portal/6094214/4393352.pdf>

to strengthen research skills of doctoral students by implementing new supervision models and professional development of supervisor, improvement of the regular monitoring of each doctoral candidate's progress, of standards for the thesis defence, and of internal audits of research assessment. (MODEST n.d.)

This project focuses on interdisciplinary education, internationalisation, new teaching methodology and improvement of up-skills of educational staff, based on a student-centred approach. Anyone can access these course guidelines for organising doctoral training and adopt, adjust and implement in their own institution.

Faculty/Department level

#1 Portugal: [Academic Development Unit \(NDA\)](#)

Instituto Superior Técnico, University of Lisbon

The Instituto Superior Técnico (IST) of the University of Lisboa created its own Academic Development Unit (NDA) in 2017, which evolved from a Tutoring Support Office created in 2003/2004. NDA focuses on teaching/learning strategies and dynamics that promote students' academic development, as well as teaching staff and researchers' career development. One of its specific goals is "to promote the integral development and the pedagogical quality of teaching staff and researchers". They have a Development and Training Programme which includes three areas: curricular units', teaching and research activities' planning; contents' transfer and positioning the student in the centre of the teaching/learning process; and optimisation of evaluation processes and feedback. IST also has in place, since 2013/2014, the project 'Observe and Learn'. Currently, NDA organises the observation of classes with "the objective of promoting and improving teaching staff pedagogical competencies". Teaching staff can register for this on a voluntary basis. During emergency remote teaching, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, NDA offered 'Observation of Online Teaching'. They also have the Programme Shaping the Future, since 2015/2016, geared towards new teaching staff, until they get tenure. This Programme includes basic training, complementary training, mentoring, observation of classes, support to partial sabbatical leaves abroad and access to the Programme Start-Up funds, which finances sabbatical leaves and the implementation of a scientific-pedagogical project.

#2 United Kingdom: Supervisor Development Programme

Durham University

At Durham University, individual departments are responsible for ensuring that their new doctoral supervisors attend the initial supervisor development programme. This consists of two components. The first is a three-hour workshop, which covers: (1) the changing international context of doctoral education; (2) the institutional

context at Durham; (3) the pedagogical context; and (4) the practice context (case studies of dealing with wellbeing and mental health, conflicts and difficult conversations). The other is a one-hour faculty-based session, which involves an introduction on faculty policies by the faculty PG lead and presentations by two supervisors from the faculty who have won the University's award for excellence in doctoral supervision, including a question-and-answer session.

5.3 Best Practice Guideline 8 – building communities of practice

University level

#1 The Netherlands: Utrecht University

The [Teaching Academy Utrecht University](#) (TAUU) is part of the Centre for Academic Teaching. TAUU is a network for and by all lecturers at Utrecht University. Its mission is to improve the quality of university education by bringing together teachers from different faculties to learn from each other, find inspiration, collaborate and innovate.¹⁵ Utrecht University also has a Teaching & Learning Lab (TLL), which constitutes a teaching laboratory for lecturers, students, didactic researchers and companies. It is a place to jointly explore, develop and test new possibilities in educational practice. Lecturers innovate their education and inspire colleagues with new ideas.

#2 Portugal: University of Coimbra

[UC DocênciaLABS](#) is an initiative that includes experience sharing moments (as well as training workshops). The initiative is for any teacher or researcher at the University of Coimbra. The objective is to trigger reflection, training and impetus processes for changing pedagogy at the University and, eventually, leading to a cultural transformation of the teaching-learning process. The creation of the [University Doctoral Schools](#) and the organisation of Doctoral Schools' meetings have also triggered a discussion on doctoral supervision quality and training across the University. Sharing experiences, concerns and practices has initiated a fruitful discussion on doctoral students' qualifications and training possibilities.

¹⁵ See <https://www.uu.nl/en/education/centre-for-academic-teaching/community-network/teachers-community-tauu>

6. Concluding remarks: The Impact of Covid-19

The Covid-19 pandemic had a very clear impact on the activities related to curriculum development evaluation, reward and promotion of teaching excellence, including doctoral supervision, mainly due to the disruptive character in terms of overall activities, face-to-face interaction and severe restrictions to field-related research. Moreover, the conditions to working-from-home were, in many cases, not the best, be it for technological reasons, family reasons, or other, bringing in additional challenges. In most cases, remote emergency teaching was put in place as a way to counter the impact of the pandemic in the normal teaching/training activities. Platforms were created, further developed or newly-acquired for these purposes, with wide success, despite obvious limitations (inclusion issues are quite relevant in this regard, as well as frustration and boredom associated to remote teaching, both for lecturers and students, as evidenced in the survey conducted within this project referred to in IO1 report, or even the unpreparedness of both students and lecturers (Salmi 2020)). In this regard, although frustration with technology affects substantially performance, social factors are more important than technical ones for success (Miller and King 2003). Some authors even suggest the image of an “online teacher persona”, meaning playing a certain role adequate to the online teaching setting (Baran *et al* 2013, pp. 31-32). If these emergency procedures paved the way for thinking anew about some of these processes (Coimbra Group 2020), it also showed how much social interaction, networking, the conduct of fieldwork, among others, are so fundamental in all the activities this report refers to.

What the literature tells us is that the impact of Covid-19 revealed capacity of adaptation from Universities/Institutions, with quick adjustments to allow teaching online, trying to keep contact with students, adjusting methods of assessment and communication, seeking to assure quality in a challenging context. As mentioned in IO1 report, whether this remote emergency teaching will be “grasped as a real opportunity for structural and pedagogical change that embraces the advantages of technology and avoids its pitfalls will also determine the future of higher education teaching excellence and future student learning strategies” (Dick *et al* 2020). This has an obvious impact about how to think of the evaluation dimension, including reward and promotion of teaching excellence. Most important is the need to differentiate between remote or online teaching and e-learning or learning-at-a-distance. The latter has been in place for a long time in some higher education institutions and implies a specific approach and philosophy to self-learning through making available adequate materials and methodologies. The former refers to the emergency replacement of in-class teaching with technological means that allowed the continuation of pedagogical activities online. These are two very different worlds, and the pandemic had a severe impact in the first one, but not so much in the second one, besides the pressure that came from traditional teaching to try to learn from their experience. This means lessons might be learned from e-learning practices, even if remote teaching is massively abandoned in a post-pandemic context.

As for supervision, the impact of the pandemic was less severe as there were already at a distance tools in place to facilitate supervision. One-to-one ‘supervisor-supervisee’ remote meetings were already taking place, many times due to research issues, such as fieldwork, thus making adaptation to remote contact easier. Nevertheless, the individual psychological impact of the pandemic should not be disregarded. Anyway, some Universities/Institutions adjusted assessment procedures and deadlines, and introduced measures, such as qualification programmes for doctoral researchers, particularly focusing on transferable skills training, which might be highlighted as a good practice (Coimbra Group 2020).

If teaching showed adaptability, reward schemes had to be fundamentally adjusted, as the usual criteria in place for assessing teaching excellence, for example, were not applicable. Surveys were adjusted and conducted, but the results would require a better understanding of the conditions/context, thus being limited in their reach (MŠMT 2021). Perhaps the qualitative dimension of surveys where comments might be formulated regarding adequacy of the Universities’ Contingency Plans, available students’ and teaching staff support, adaptations of study plans, etc. might reveal interesting data to assist in the reflection. In some cases, ‘Observation of Online Teaching’ (IST n.d.) was put in place as a way to maintain support and assure quality, whilst allowing continued assessment of teaching excellence procedures.

The second report of Covid-19 impact on higher education institutions published by the Coimbra Group in December 2021- *Universities’ response to the Covid-19 crisis: What have we learnt so far?* - assessed the additional pandemic effects on doctoral education at 25 Coimbra Group universities (Coimbra Group 2021). The survey among participating universities revealed that the Covid-19 crisis was the main driver for the digitalisation of the PhD academic procedures, administrative processes and activities related to professional development, such as, e.g., doctoral seminars, transferable skills workshops, and professional development training. The majority of surveyed universities plan on continuing hybrid qualification offers for doctoral candidates, with multi-campus institutions and collaborations on the regional, national and international

levels (European University Initiatives and international research consortia), finding it particularly beneficial for their performance. The results of the report survey show that preparation for the future possible disruptions among participating universities is, in most cases, limited to the statements that applying Covid-19 experiences in this regard will be beneficial if similar disruptive situations were to happen. Though, in general, institutions agree that their arrangements for the pandemic period proved to be largely successful, the majority have not established protocols for such emergencies. Importantly, those institutions that implemented protocols to ensure structured supervision of doctoral candidates state that these provided for a stable supervision environment.

Furthermore, acknowledging that the pandemic has placed PhD students under particular strain and pressure, many universities put in place monitoring processes and initiatives to support their doctoral candidates. Several institutions recognised the impact that the leadership style of the supervisor may have on the well-being of doctoral researchers, by

addressing specifically the supervisors with initiatives such as, e.g., the biannual Supervisor Award on the topic of how supervisors may deal with mental health issues of their doctoral candidates launched by the University of Graz.

Finally, a part of the report survey concentrated specifically on the impacts that the pandemic had on doctoral supervision activities. Although at some institutions (the University of Groningen and Aarhus University) PhD candidates were quite satisfied with online supervision practice, challenges attached to it should be mitigated by adequate procedures and activities. Several participating universities reported establishing support services for supervisors, such as e-teaching courses, supervisor seminars and meetings, revised guidelines for good supervision and short manuals.

Overall, although the report revealed some positive outcomes of Covid-19 crisis on doctoral supervision processes in the scope of internationalisation, such as an increased possibility for Cotutelles, it indicated that online teaching and supervision might lead to a poor interaction for the whole doctoral process, including difficulties in engagement and commitment, isolation and a lack of the necessary doctoral socialisation. It also

creates several challenges for supervisors that relate to the detection of overlapping topics of theses, empathy for feelings and the emotional well-being of the doctoral researchers, and the identification of conflicts between team/committee members or supervisor and PhD candidate. Some key takeaways from the Coimbra Group study refer to the importance of prioritised access to offices, labs and supervision (even if only digitally) for PhD candidates in times of disruptions; the evidence that certain research subjects cannot be dealt with online; and the need for protocols for structured supervision of doctoral candidates, which provide for a stable supervision environment and offer an opportunity to discuss delays and other challenges.

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