

Staff development in learning and teaching at European universities

Results from the STAFF-DEV survey

Thérèse Zhang

January 2025



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**Co-funded by
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How to cite this report:

Zhang, T. (2025). Staff development in learning and teaching at European universities. Brussels: European University Association.

European University Association asbl

Avenue de l'Yser 24

1040 Brussels

Belgium

+32 (0) 2 230 55 44

www.eua.eu · info@eua.eu

Rue du Rhône 114

Case postale 3174

1211 Geneva 3, Switzerland

+41 22 552 02 96

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Acknowledgements

This report is based on the results of a survey conducted between April and July 2024, which collected responses from higher education institutions (HEIs) in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) (see Chapter 1 and Annex 1). I am particularly grateful to the responding institutions for their contributions; this study would not have been possible without them.

The survey is part of the EU-funded project “Staff development in learning and teaching at European universities” (STAFF-DEV), which the European University Association (EUA) coordinates in partnership with University College Cork in Ireland, Utrecht University in the Netherlands, Ruhr University Bochum in Germany and the University of Oslo in Norway. Thanks go to partners for their engagement, their thoughtful advice and their experience sharing during all phases of the survey that led to this report. A particular acknowledgement is addressed to Catherine O’Mahony, Owen Jump and Katy Direen at University College Cork, for their close collaboration in mapping staff development in Europe. The project Advisory Board should also be thanked for its contribution.

The European Commission should be thanked for co-funding the STAFF-DEV project through its Erasmus+ programme.

Finally, thanks go to EUA colleagues who contributed to this report in various ways. In particular, Henriette Stoeber, Policy Analyst at EUA’s Higher Education Policy Unit, provided data evaluation. Gohar Hovhannisyan, Project and Policy Officer, and Raphaële Fischer-Angoulvent, Administrative Assistant at the Higher Education Policy Unit, supported all project activities. Inès Mezher at EUA’s Communications Unit conducted the design process for this report. Michael Gaebel, Director of the Higher Education Policy Unit, should be thanked for his continuous support throughout the project activities.

Thérèse Zhang

Deputy Director for Higher Education Policy
European University Association (EUA)

Key findings

Chapter 1 *The STAFF-DEV project and survey*

This report is based on the results of a survey conducted between April and July 2024 under the Erasmus+-funded project “Staff development in learning and teaching at European universities” (STAFF-DEV). It collected responses from 163 HEIs based in 40 countries across the EHEA. The report examines the national context in which staff development takes place, the approaches and activities for staff development organised at HEIs, and how staff development is connected with academic assessment and career progression.

Chapter 2 *The context: staff development in the EHEA*

It is mostly HEIs themselves that organise staff development in teaching. At almost two thirds of institutions, staff development can also be organised through university networks. In addition, for one third of HEIs, governmental organisations at national and regional level offer staff development — and more prominently so in the UK, Ireland and Finland. Interestingly, in none of the countries represented in the survey sample are HEIs unanimous in agreeing that there is a governmental organisation in charge. This may point to how activities from such organisations are perceived or known by HEIs, but also to whether or not these activities are interpreted as staff development.

In the EHEA, 61% of HEIs find national initiatives in learning and teaching from the past five years useful. This is more often the case for HEIs in Ireland, Sweden and the UK. There are multiple patterns for such national initiatives and the ways they support staff development in teaching. While the ministry often contributes with funding or by providing the initial impetus, these initiatives are commonly led by various players in the higher education sector, including national organisations or public agencies, networks of practitioners, or HEIs themselves. Such initiatives do not necessarily lead to regulatory reforms, yet they are useful for initiating mid-term and long(er)-term changes and provide directions for future developments in supporting teaching and teachers.

Chapter 3 *Staff development at higher education institutions*

Over 80% of HEIs across the EHEA offer training opportunities for teaching staff, and 96% of HEIs responding to the STAFF-DEV survey offer formal staff development opportunities. HEIs clearly see the value of staff development in teaching, which is deemed useful for community building among staff and for teachers' self-confidence and wellbeing, supports the institution's vision on learning and teaching, and supports the personal development of staff responsible for teaching. Staff development occupies a good place in HEIs' learning and teaching strategies, with 89% of HEIs having such strategies referring to staff development. Three quarters of HEIs use indicator-based monitoring for staff development in teaching, with a variety of indicators addressing individuals' paths as well as agglomerated returns at institutional level. Most HEIs also have structures in place to support and organise staff development: 86% of HEIs have a learning and teaching centre, with 93% of them taking care of offering staff development courses, among other tasks.

Formal staff development opportunities, defined as those organised by the institution with assigned learning objectives and an assessment upon completion, are offered mainly in an optional way. However, HEIs give more attention to entry-level teachers: in their case, formal training or courses are more often compulsory, as this is also a way to introduce them to the institution's teaching philosophy. The baseline offer can be supplemented by mostly optional and more advanced offers. Nevertheless, it is generally difficult to categorise training or courses as compulsory or optional; they might be compulsory in some contexts, and the compulsory character is attached to the status of the person and their stage of advancement in career and teaching experience. The most common assessment proposed upon completion of a formal staff development activity is a teaching portfolio; however, at 30% of HEIs, formal training is completed with no assessment as such. A variety of approaches that seem closer to a validation process are used upon completion of formal training or a course; it can take the form of a continuum beyond completion, through measures such as a follow-up during periodic appraisals. The majority of HEIs do not allocate credits upon completion, or not throughout the whole institution.

In the vast majority of HEIs, there is no direct correlation between receiving negative teaching evaluations and the obligation to undertake formal staff development, which is not considered as a route to mitigate or remedy the issues related to teaching. Non-academic staff are rarely required to take formal staff development in teaching; however, they are sometimes welcome to participate.

A great variety of contents and formats can be observed in the HEIs' offer. While some contents are used widely (introductory offerings on pedagogy and didactics), others are designed to fit the institution's priorities and strategic goals. Among specific topics addressed in advanced staff development activities, digitalisation is by far the most frequent one.

In addition to formal staff development, HEIs have a wealth of self-organised activities in place, led by individuals or groups of individuals, or organised by the institution itself in a more informal way. Such activities range from peer-learning or mentoring schemes to community-building practices (experience sharing in groups with common interests, events, etc.). Self-organised activities tend to fulfil a demand for discipline-specific, topic- or interest-based focuses. Faculties and departments play an important role in these. While formal training may address a generic audience of teachers, less formal activities are used for specificities and immediate needs. The complementarity between different forms of staff development creates and sustains a culture of teaching that is geared towards development for individuals and enhancement for the institution. Such complementarity is useful in addressing different needs and demands, ranging from a baseline offer available for all staff to more specific, discipline- and needs-related demands. The role of institutional leadership in recognising the informal activities in place and amplifying them is seen as crucial.

Chapter 4 *Staff development, recognition for teaching and career progression*

As a main challenge for organising and offering staff development, HEIs identify the lack of time for participating and, connected to this, the lack of recognition for teaching and teaching-related activities, thus impacting staff's motivation to engage, especially if activities are optional. In order to fully reach their potential, staff development activities would need to be embedded in an institutional (and national) environment that recognises the value of teaching through concrete measures in assessment and career progression.

HEIs commonly have requirements in place for holding a position with teaching responsibilities, such as a teaching qualification or proven teaching experience. Participation in staff development specifically is required in about one third of HEIs.

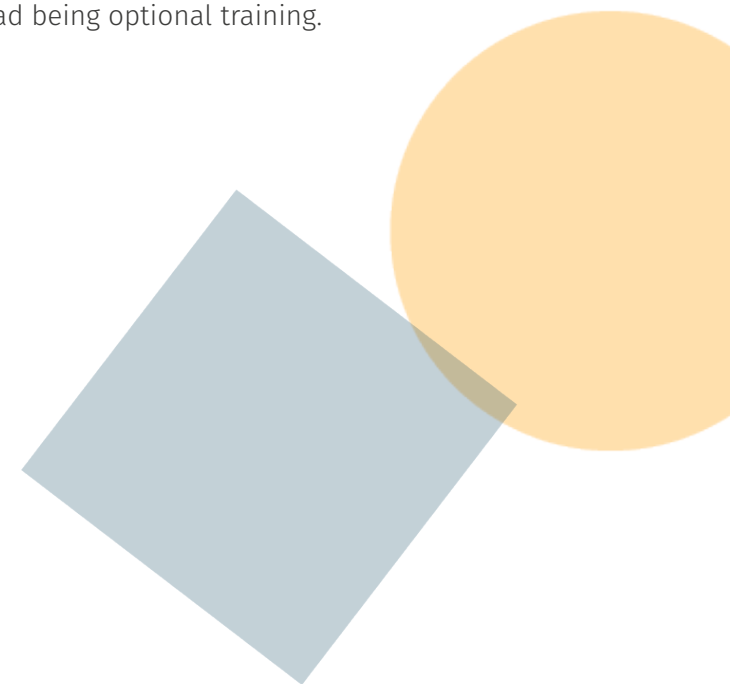
Only 31% of HEIs across the EHEA use a professional competence framework as a reference for designing and organising staff development, and this is more widespread in some countries (such as the UK, Sweden and Ireland) than in others. When used, such a framework is mostly tailored to the institution's priorities and needs, although some models may serve as a reference, such as the UK Professional Standards Framework, or scholarly work conducted on this topic.

About half of institutions organise their formal staff development such that different offers and formats target different stages of a career. HEIs generally emphasise the importance of baseline training when starting a position at the institution, or to be completed within a defined time period after the start. The scaling of offers can be structured according to academic positions or years of experience.

About half of institutions also take staff development into account in career progression. This is slightly more frequent for staff in permanent positions than for those in temporary positions, although there may be more obligations to undergo training and show evidence of it for temporary staff seeking a permanent position. It can prove complex to navigate through the various

and sometimes ad hoc regulations and incentive systems, especially if they differ depending on faculties within the same institution. The demarcation line between what is required to progress in a career and what is considered an asset can be a fine one. Processes where staff development needs to be documented are typically in place when academic staff start their position, in the context of a periodic evaluation, upon renewal of a temporary contract, and when moving from a temporary position to a permanent one.

Finally, when academic staff take up a position of leader in teaching, over half of institutions take this into account for academic assessment and career progression. In addition, HEIs offer other measures to support leaders in teaching, the most widespread being optional training.



Chapter 1

The STAFF-DEV project and survey

1.1. STAFF DEVELOPMENT IN TEACHING

In recent years, attention towards learning and teaching has been growing, both at higher education institutions (HEIs) and from governments in a European context, notably in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). The 2024 Tirana Communiqué highlighted that “teaching should be valued on equal footing with research and other professional tasks”. The ministers responsible for higher education confirmed that the crucial role of teaching staff should be acknowledged “in supporting high-quality, learner-centred and innovative learning and teaching”. To ensure this, HEIs need to offer “adequate and attractive working conditions, staff development opportunities, and assessment and career progression based on appropriate criteria and metrics” (EHEA, 2024).

At the same time, HEIs across the EHEA increasingly pay attention to their learning and teaching strategies, while strategy implementation, capacity building and the need for increased inter-institutional cooperation are ongoing issues for discussion and peer learning. Against this background, since 2017 the European University Association (EUA) has engaged in a series of activities on learning and teaching, each of which has confirmed the need to increase exchanges of practices to enhance and accelerate positive developments.

Staff development in teaching has been identified as one of the drivers for further enhancing learning and teaching at HEIs. It is mentioned as such in the Annex III to the 2020 Rome Communiqué endorsed by the ministers in the EHEA (EHEA, 2020). Offering adequate (continued) professional development to teachers, and motivating them to engage in it through adequate recognition for teaching, has also been one of the most often-cited recommendations emerging from EUA peer-learning activities since 2017. EUA’s Trends report of 2018 also highlighted that across Europe, the majority of HEIs already offer some form of courses to teachers for enhancing teaching skills. EUA’s reports on national initiatives in learning and teaching, in 2018 and 2022, added that, in a context where formal pedagogical staff development is not regulated in most EHEA countries, organising staff development lies mostly with the institutions themselves.

The “Staff development for learning and teaching at European universities” (STAFF-DEV) project¹ aims to map more precisely and analyse how staff development is being implemented at European HEIs, how it is embedded into institutional and national strategies for learning and teaching and academic assessment, and what HEIs and national-/system-level stakeholders could learn from each other in this regard. The project will contribute to a knowledge base on staff development, as well as capacity building in learning and teaching, benefitting HEIs at different stages of developing their support and strategic approaches on learning and teaching and academic assessment.

This report is the first stage of the STAFF-DEV project.

In the context of the project, “**staff development**” in teaching should be understood as opportunities for HEIs’ personnel involved in student learning to grow their professional competences and reflect on their role, conceptions and needs. In the survey, this translated into exploring training, community building and other development-related aspects.

1.2. THE SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE AND SAMPLE

The STAFF-DEV survey was conducted between April and July 2024.

Participating institutions were invited to provide comprehensive information on:

- ❖ the institution’s profile
- ❖ staff development approach and activities organised at the institution

- ❖ how the institution organises career progression and celebrates teaching
- ❖ the national context.

A full version of the STAFF-DEV survey questionnaire can be found in Annex 1.

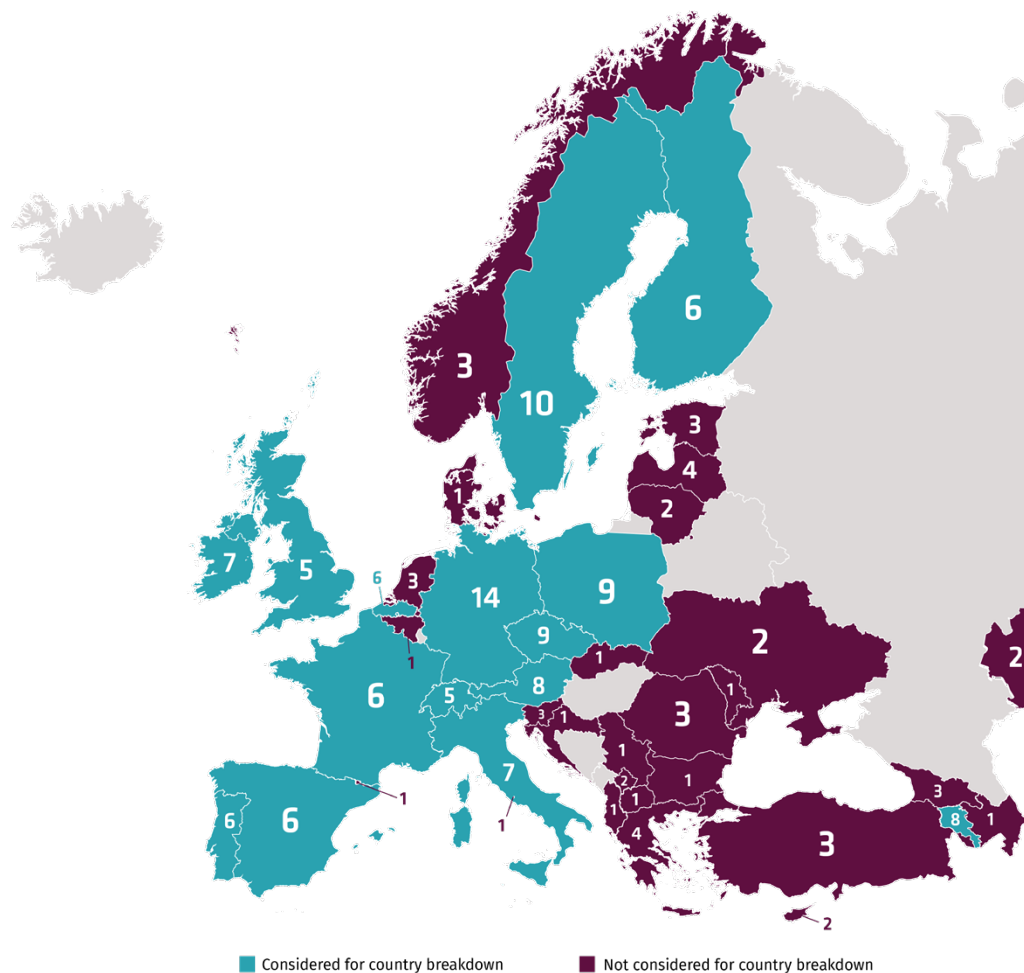
Given the specific topic of the survey, it may be assumed that the HEIs participating are those with either some experience of, or at least a demonstrated interest in, staff development in teaching. The survey collected a total of 163 responses from HEIs in 41 systems² across the EHEA. Only one response per institution was collected, for which a senior institutional representative was asked to take responsibility. About half of respondents were senior administrative staff at institutional level (49% of HEIs), another quarter were vice-rectors or in an equivalent function (24%), and the remaining quarter were rectors or a member of the rector’s cabinet (11%) and other senior positions with responsibilities in staff development.

The country with the highest number of responses was Germany (14 responses), followed by Sweden (10), Czechia (9), Poland (9), Armenia (8) and Austria (8). In the analysis of responses, higher education systems with five or more participating institutions were considered for a country breakdown, i.e. when data from the overall sample is compared and aggregated into system-level results. This was the case for 15 out of the 41 higher education systems (Fig. 1). Differences at system level are cited in the report when they varied by more than 15% of the average response for the full sample.

² The term “higher education system” refers to countries, as well as to regions within countries, where the competence for higher education is devolved and autonomously managed. For instance, Belgium is one country with three systems (the Flemish Community, the French-speaking Community and the German-speaking Community).

¹ <https://www.eua.eu/our-work/projects/eu-funded-projects/staffdev.html>

FIGURE 1 Survey participants by country³

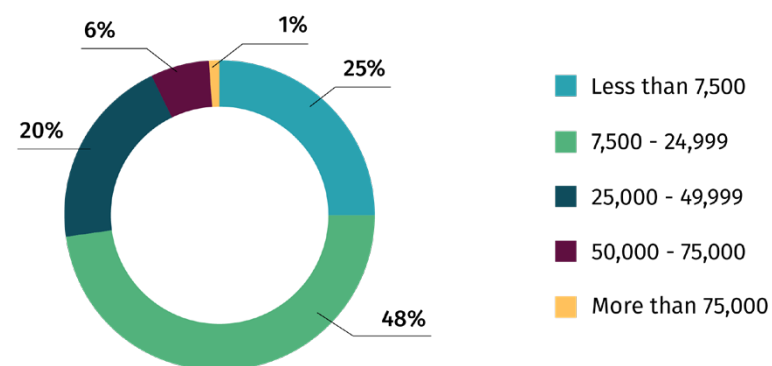


Q1. Please select your country/higher education system and institution from the drop-down menus (...). N=163

3 “Kosovo”: This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

The size of responding HEIs ranges from smaller institutions with fewer than 7,500 students to very large ones with over 75,000 students; about half of respondents are mid-sized institutions with between 7,500 and 24,999 students (Fig. 2).

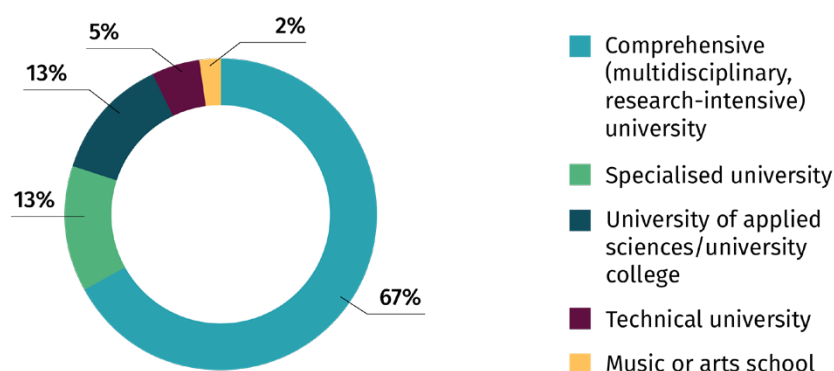
FIGURE 2 Size of participating HEIs



Q3. What is the approximate number of students enrolled at your institution? N=163

Over two thirds of participating HEIs are comprehensive (multidisciplinary, research-intensive) universities.⁴ Specialised universities and universities of applied sciences both represent 13% of the survey sample. A smaller share of respondents identify themselves as technical universities or music or art schools (Fig. 3).

FIGURE 3 Types of institution



Q4. Please indicate the type of institution. N=163

⁴ It is complex to propose a Europe-wide categorisation of types of institution. In the STAFF-DEV survey, the following categorisation has been used: comprehensive universities award degrees in all three cycles and are multidisciplinary (i.e. programmes in more than two subject areas/ fields of science); specialised universities award degrees in all three cycles and are specialised in a particular subject area/field of science; technical universities award degrees in all three cycles and are specialised in technology, engineering and natural sciences; universities of applied sciences, or university colleges, offer more profession-oriented studies, usually at the first and second degree cycles only; and music or arts schools specialise in music and/or arts.

Chapter 2

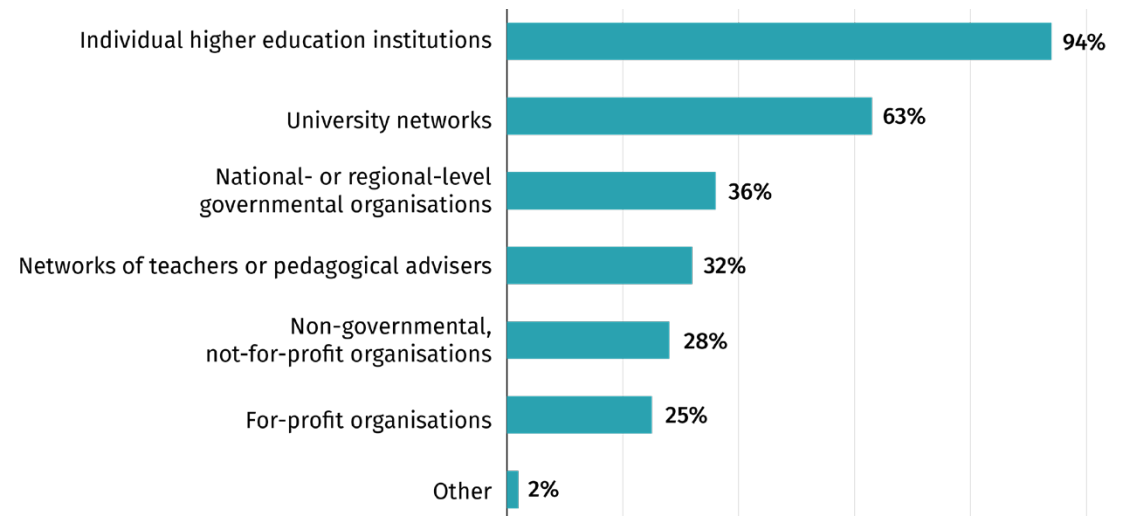
The context: staff development in the EHEA

In order to situate staff development and its importance for learning and teaching at institutions, the context in which it takes place matters. This chapter explores the general trends in the EHEA in this regard: who typically organises staff development in teaching, and the role of national initiatives.

2.1. WHO ORGANISES STAFF DEVELOPMENT IN TEACHING?

Multiple players may come into the picture for organising and offering staff development in teaching. However, for almost all institutions (94%) across the EHEA, staff development and, more generally, support in teaching are organised by individual HEIs. This confirms a continuing trend documented since the 2018 study *National Initiatives in Learning and Teaching in Europe* (Bunescu and Gaebel, 2018, p. 14) and the 2022 study *National Developments in Learning and Teaching in Europe* (Zhang, 2022, p. 36). However, this percentage conceals differences between higher education systems: in Italy, in particular, only 57% of HEIs answer that this is the case.

FIGURE 4 Who organises staff development?



Q27. In your country, who organises staff development courses/support in teaching? N=163

At almost two thirds of institutions (63%), staff development is also organised through university networks.⁵ This is particularly the case in Austria (at 88% of HEIs surveyed), Germany (86%), Ireland (86%), Finland (83%), Portugal (83%) and the UK (80%). It is much less the case for institutions in Czechia (33%), Belgium (FL) (33%), Armenia (38%) and Switzerland (40%).

For about one third of HEIs (36%), governmental organisations at national or regional level organise staff development. Interestingly, in none of the countries where a country breakdown analysis was conducted, was there unanimity in agreeing that there is such a governmental organisation in charge. This may point to how activities from such organisations are perceived or known by HEIs, but could also relate to whether or not these activities are interpreted as staff development (or, for instance, whether they are about supporting the quality of teaching generally). More institutions in Ireland (86%), Finland (67%) and the UK (60%) agree that a national or regional governmental organisation do organise staff development. None of the French institutions are aware of a national-level organisation playing such a role.

Networks of teachers and/or pedagogical advisers also play a role in organising staff development. While this is the case for an average of 32% of surveyed HEIs, such networks seem to be particularly active or appreciated in the UK (with 80% of HEIs saying that networks organise staff development), Switzerland (60%), Ireland (57%) and Belgium (FL) (50%).

Finally, non-governmental organisations are particularly active in offering staff development in the UK (60% of HEIs), Ireland (57%) and Poland (56%), while for-profit organisations are more often cited as providers of staff development in Poland (67%), the UK (60%) and Germany (43%). This contrasts with the 2022 study, where for-profit organisations were very rarely mentioned as providers, and often limited to a transactional relationship related to the purchase of a (technology) tool (Zhang, 2022, p. 37).

⁵ The term “network” is to be understood generally, and not necessarily relating to one type of network. Thus, it may cover a variety of collaboration formats across institutions.

2.2. NATIONAL INITIATIVES IN STAFF DEVELOPMENT

The 2022 study on national initiatives highlighted that among the interviewees from the 30 EHEA countries interviewed at that time, there was a general assumption that the time has come to take action to better respond to societal needs through higher education, as well as increased awareness from ministries and institutional leaders that it is necessary to promote teaching and introduce incentives to this end (Zhang, 2022, p. 11).

Do HEIs find national- or system-level initiatives in the past five years useful? For 61% of HEIs in the EHEA, the answer is “yes”. This is particularly the case for all HEIs in Ireland, and for 80% of HEIs in Sweden and the UK. It is worth noting that, while the ministry often contributes with funding or by providing the initial impetus, such initiatives in staff development are mostly led by various players in the higher education sector:

- ❖ A national- or system-level organisation, or a public agency. Examples include the Swedish Higher Education Council and the Irish National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (see box below).
- ❖ Networks or communities of practitioners. Examples include the LNO2 network in Belgium,⁶ which is supported by the Flemish government and offers staff development opportunities for educational developers, as well as events (annual conference, webinars, special interest groups).
- ❖ National quality assurance agencies. These are cited as training providers and/or networking places for teacher training in Cyprus, Armenia and Ireland. The training programmes and seminars provided by the Higher Education Quality Council (YÖKAK) in Türkiye are also mentioned as having played a role in enhancing the competences of academic staff.

⁶ www.lno2.be

- ❖ Specific regional initiatives or programmes. Examples include Science Space Styria in Austria and the “Innovation Plus” programme offered by the Ministry of Science in Lower Saxony (Germany).
- ❖ HEIs coordinating among themselves to this end. This is the case in Portugal, for instance, where several universities co-organise inter-institutional pedagogical days.⁷ In Greece, a major development in recent years has been the creation, in 2022, of a Greek network of centres for teaching and learning, which brings together know-how and disseminates examples of good practice.⁸ In Switzerland, the national rectors’ conference, swissuniversities, offers a programme dedicated to strengthening digital skills in teaching and supports universities’ projects in teaching.⁹
- ❖ National-level projects, coordinated or initiated by the ministry with national or external funding (such as the European Social Fund). One example cited by HEIs is the Polish programme “Knowledge Education Development”;¹⁰ with several strands or projects providing, among other things, opportunities for teachers to meet, network and peer learn, as well as find funding streams for staff development. One university noted that this had helped in capacity building for its learning and teaching centre, and in creating a sustainable network of heads of such centres from other institutions.

⁷ <https://cms.ua.pt/jornadasidp/>

⁸ <https://www.ltcnetwork.net/index.php/en/#mission>

⁹ <https://www.swissuniversities.ch/themen/digitalisierung/digital-skills>

¹⁰ <https://www.gov.pl/web/nauka/program-operacyjny-wiedza-edukacja-rozwoj1>

Country example – Austria

Under the umbrella initiative “Atlas for Good Teaching”, initiated by the Austrian Rectors’ Conference and other stakeholders in higher education and currently supported by the Austrian federal ministry, a “dialogue on higher education learning and teaching” brings together people involved in learning and teaching development to exchange on topics of common interest and experiences from practice. The overall goal is to make good teaching more visible within and outside universities and to foster networks.

For more information: <https://gutelehre.at/dialog-z-hochschulischen-lehre>

Country example – Ireland

For several years, the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education has been contributing to supporting staff development in teaching through various programmes and initiatives, such as the funding programme SATLE (Strategic Alignment of Teaching and Learning Enhancement) and the DELTA (Disciplinary Excellence in Learning, Teaching and Assessment Award), to name just two examples cited by the HEIs in the STAFF-DEV survey.

For more information: <https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/>

In addition, the Technological Higher Education Association (THEA) and the Irish Universities Association (IUA) co-coordinate the N-TUTORR programme, funded by the EU’s NextGen funds and part of the Irish National Recovery and Resilience Plan. N-TUTORR is designed to transform learning, teaching and assessment by focusing on transforming the student experience and developing the capabilities of all staff to address a sustainable pedagogical and learning environment.

For more information: <https://www.transforminglearning.ie/>

Country example – Sweden

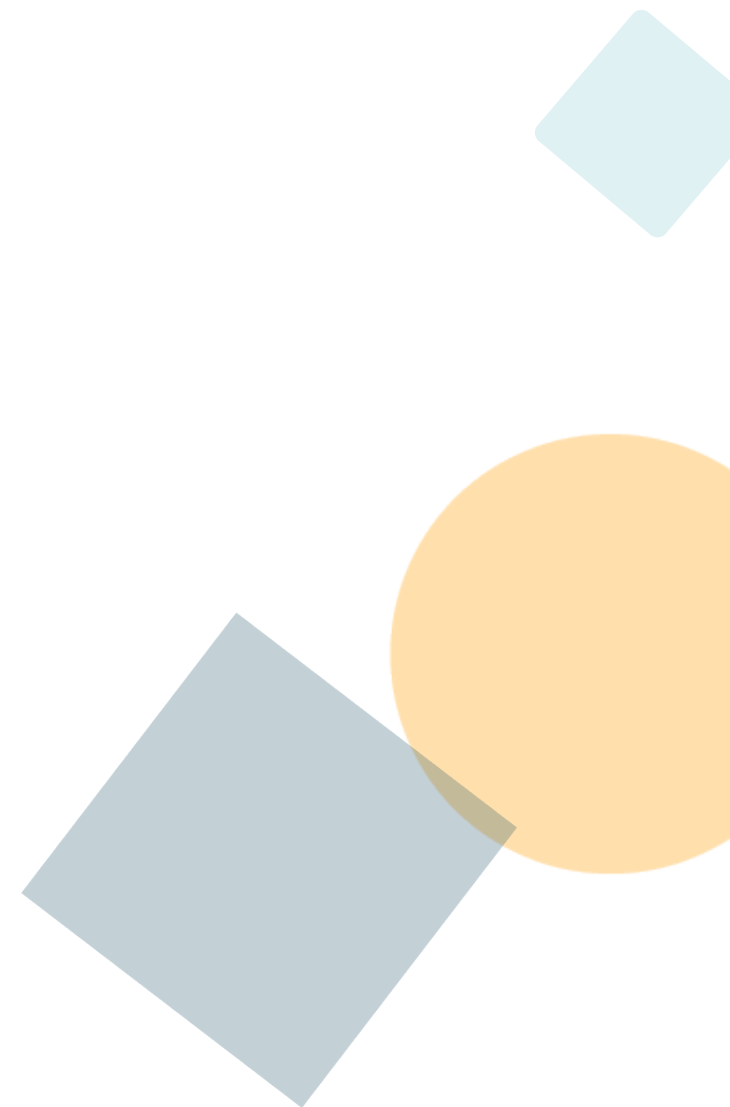
The Swedish Council for Higher Education (UHR), a public agency funded by contributions from the HEIs and public funding, organises the Elevating Higher Education Pedagogy (*Högskolepedagogiskt lyftet*) initiative, which aims to identify areas that require special support and training, and to funnel these into options for financing local and national support initiatives where appropriate.

For more information: <https://hpu.uhr.se/om-hpu/hogskolepedagogiskt-lyft-di/>

In 2022–2023, UHR was also responsible for an initiative to promote joint pedagogical development work between universities and university colleges. Among other things, UHR has been responsible for the exchange of experience between relevant actors at the national level and has allocated funds for development efforts.

For more information: <https://www.uhr.se/om-uhr/detta-gor-uhr/projekt-och-uppdrag/hogskolepedagogisk-utveckling/#:~:text=H%C3%B6gskolepedagogiskt,lyftet>

For 38% of HEIs, national- or system-level initiatives that they find useful have already ended. Such initiatives are continuing for 35% of HEIs, and for 22% of institutions there is no time limit on these initiatives. For initiatives that have already ended, the follow-up is most often taken charge of by individual HEIs themselves (51%). In 30% of cases, more funding will be allocated to the same issues in the future, and in 27% of cases there will be a follow-up initiative that is also time-limited. Only 14% of HEIs reporting an initiative that has ended envisage that a law and/or regulation will be changed. This seems to show that, while such initiatives do not necessarily lead to a regulatory change, they are still useful for initiating mid-term and long(er)-term changes and providing directions for future developments in supporting teaching and teachers.



Chapter 3

Staff development at higher education institutions

HEIs see a clear value in staff development in teaching, and this can be summarised in the following elements.

Community-building and wellbeing perspective	Institutional perspective	Individual development perspective
Creating and maintaining a sense of community, engagement and dynamics	Creating and maintaining a sense of accountability	Supporting the implementation of newly acquired competences in classrooms
Contributing to teachers' self-confidence, wellbeing and mutual support	Supporting the institution's pedagogical vision by making teaching practices more "synchronised" across different disciplines and departments, with an emphasis on similar values and competences	Better informing teachers, broadening their capacity to address transversal aspects (such as equity, diversity and inclusion)
Overcoming teachers' frustration over (common) challenges		Improving teachers' awareness on engaging students through active learning methods
		Helping to tackle new challenges (e.g. emergency remote teaching during the Covid-19 crisis, artificial intelligence)

Institutions with well-developed staff development systems adapt to similar changes or crises easier, since they are able to address them with their communities.

a STAFF-DEV responding institution

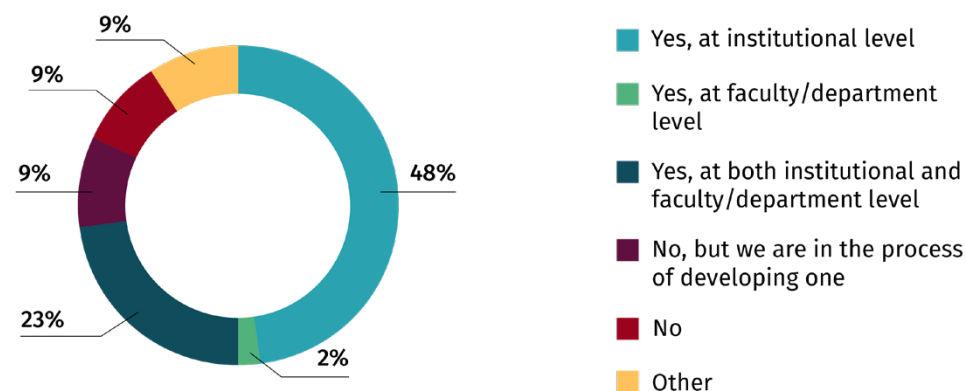
According to EUA's Trends 2024 study, over 80% of HEIs in the EHEA do offer some sort of support to teachers, such as fostering or organising exchanges and collaboration opportunities, offering training or offering technical support (Gaebel and Zhang, 2024, p. 39). The STAFF-DEV survey further explores how this support is designed and organised as staff development, and what the institutional framework that enables such support consists of.

3.1. THE INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK IN PLACE

3.1.1. Learning and teaching strategies

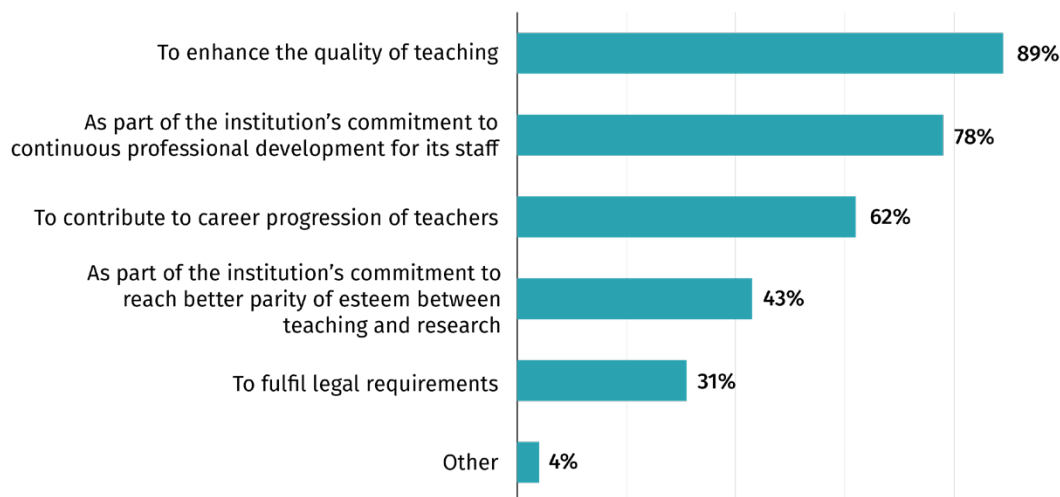
According to the STAFF-DEV survey results, 73% of HEIs do have a learning and teaching strategy, at institutional level (the most frequent case); at both institutional and faculty levels; or, more rarely, at faculty level only. An additional 9% of HEIs are in the process of developing a learning and teaching strategy. Some 9% of HEIs would define their situation otherwise, mostly through having a vision, objectives, principles or quality standards related to learning and teaching embedded in a broader strategy at their institution. Institutions can also develop a specific pedagogical approach, which is not a strategy per se, yet addresses what the institution aims to do in learning and teaching.

FIGURE 5 Learning and teaching strategies



Q5. Does your institution have a learning and teaching strategy? N=162

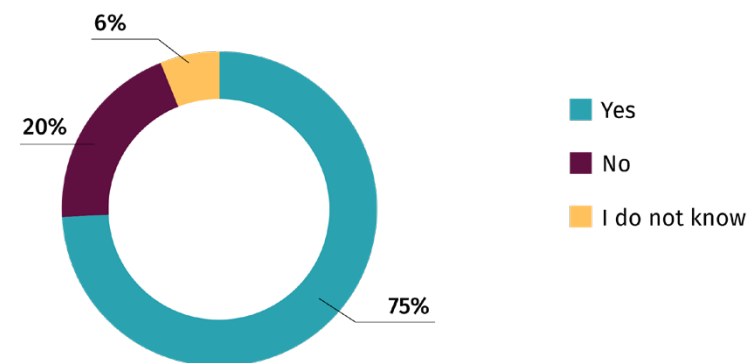
When mentioned in learning and teaching strategies, the main purpose of offering staff development is described as related to enhancing the quality of teaching. Other stated purposes include the institution's commitment to continuous professional development for its staff, contributing to teachers' career progression, reaching a better parity of esteem between teaching and research, and, to a lesser extent, fulfilling legal requirements (see Fig. 6).

FIGURE 6 Purpose of offering staff development

Q5.2. Under this strategy, what is/are the purpose(s) of offering staff development in learning and teaching? N=119

3.1.2. The use of indicators for monitoring staff development activities

EUA's Trends 2024 report found that over 80% of HEIs in the EHEA already offer training opportunities in pedagogy and didactics and in digital skills (Gaebel and Zhang, 2024, p. 39). In the STAFF-DEV survey, 75% of HEIs indicate that they use indicator-based monitoring for staff development in teaching.

FIGURE 7 Use of indicators to monitor staff development

Q5.3. Does your institution use indicators to regularly collect information on and monitor staff development in teaching? N=106

Indicators cited by HEIs vary greatly in nature, ranging from general considerations related to the quality of teaching to precise measurements of quantitative attainments. The most cited indicator is undoubtedly student satisfaction and feedback, which is also the most common indicator for assessing teaching at HEIs, used at 97% of them according to Trends 2024 (Gaebel and Zhang, 2024, p. 41). This may show how participation in staff development is used as an indicator in a broader performance-based system at the institution.

Other indicators include:

- ❖ staff feedback (from deans or other line managers)
- ❖ teachers' scholarly production (in their discipline/on learning and teaching)
- ❖ the number of teaching qualifications (the number of teachers with postgraduate certificates, Master's, etc.)

- ❖ in some countries, the number of teaching fellowships (typically, the Advance HE fellowship cited by HEIs based in the UK)
- ❖ the number of staff mobilities (as a form of professional development, contributing to skills enhancement and knowledge exchange)
- ❖ participation in (international) scientific activities such as conferences
- ❖ participation in pedagogical training, staff development, peer observation (including the amount of continuous professional development training or courses taken by teachers, the list of training offered by the institution, etc.)
- ❖ information about teaching innovation projects
- ❖ the number of teaching awards
- ❖ on occasion, special focuses such as digitalisation (training on digital skills, adopting digital tools in teaching).

A number of the indicators cited, although not directly on staff development, point to a connection with a general and institution-wide monitoring of learning and teaching:

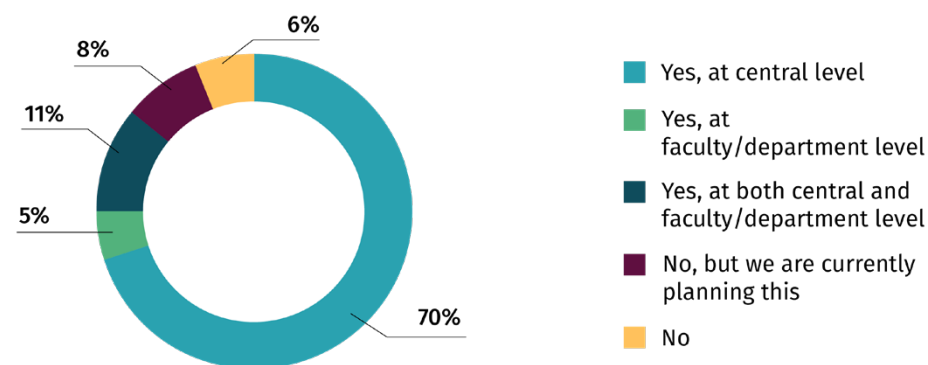
- ❖ indicators based on student outcomes (their annual progression, the correspondence of teacher's grading to the bell-curve, the percentage of students who passed the external final assessment at the first attempt, etc.)
- ❖ ratio between the number of students and number of teachers
- ❖ number of lecture hours per week.

It should be noted that such indicator-based monitoring concerns not only the monitoring of staff development undertaken by individual teachers, but also institutional situations that are monitored on a periodic basis (e.g. yearly). This may also feed demands for institutional data required in specific and regulatory contexts (quality assurance reports, reporting in a performance agreement context, etc.).

3.1.3. The role of learning and teaching centres

According to STAFF-DEV survey data, most institutions surveyed have a learning and teaching centre operating at central/institutional level (70%) and others (5%) only at faculty level. Some 11% of HEIs have centres at both institutional and faculty levels. Only 14% of HEIs do not have any type of learning and teaching centre at their institution, and of these, 8% are planning to create one.

FIGURE 8 Learning and teaching centres



Q7. At your institution, is there a unit or a centre for learning and teaching? N=163

Compared to EUA's Trends 2018 study, this is a steep increase in percentage points of HEIs having an institutional centre: back in 2018, only 47% of HEIs had such a centre (Gaebel and Zhang, 2018, p. 18, Fig. 4).¹¹ There are noticeable country differences in this matter. For instance, all (100%) of HEIs surveyed under STAFF-DEV in Germany and Ireland have such centres at institutional level, as do 83% of HEIs in Spain and 80% in the UK. In Belgium (FL), there are as many HEIs with a centre at institutional level as HEIs with centres at both institutional and faculty levels.

¹¹ The question in Trends 2018 had slightly different answer options, and thus does not allow a direct comparison of all options explored under STAFF-DEV.

A 2024 EUA report explores the diverse forms and approaches that such centres can take: some have been started at faculty level, while others were established for the provision of technical support. The report also suggests that there is growing alignment in the tasks and functions that these centres fulfil in support of the institution's learning and teaching community (Costa and Peterbauer, 2024). The STAFF-DEV survey offers an overview of roles and functions for learning and teaching centres in the EHEA. The main role, in place at 93% of HEIs, is to offer staff development courses.

TABLE 1 Roles and functions of learning and teaching centres

Offering staff development courses	93%
Providing consultations and advice to academic staff on improving teaching	84%
Offering staff development resources/material	81%
Facilitating communities of practice at the institution (networking events, peer learning, etc.)	78%
Supporting innovative teaching initiatives (through advice, financial incentives, logistical support, etc.)	76%
Supporting teaching-related project applications and implementation	73%
Organising teaching awards/prizes	53%
Analysing student feedback/performance and/or results of teachers' evaluations	49%
Conducting research on higher education pedagogy and didactics	46%
Developing and/or implementing personalised staff development plans	32%
Other	13%

Q71. What is the unit/centre's role and function? N=140

Among other roles and functions, a few learning and teaching centres support the institution's learning and teaching strategy, with a focus on the institutional "philosophy" or core approaches for learning and teaching, as well as providing quantitative and qualitative indicators for assessing the quality of education. Another role is to advise various academic committees at the institution, for instance on curriculum design or student assessment policies. Two institutions mention that they also play a formal control role in assessing the quality of study programmes; thus, they have a quality assurance role coupled with a supportive and developmental role.

Is the development of support for learning and teaching directly connected to the existence of learning and teaching strategies? Although data collected under Trends 2018 confirmed that HEIs with such strategies are more likely to also have a learning and teaching centre (Gaebel and Zhang, 2018, p. 19), the answer from the STAFF-DEV data seems less straightforward. HEIs with an institution-wide strategy on learning and teaching are more likely to have a central-level learning and teaching centre: 76% of them do. However, this does not mean that having such strategy is absolutely necessary for institutions to develop support for learning and teaching: in the small group of HEIs without any strategy for learning and teaching but planning to have one, 86% do already have a learning and teaching centre at institutional level. This suggests that a centre is not necessarily installed following a strategic purpose; the converse might also be the case, with a centre playing the role of a structure that supports further strategic thinking on learning and teaching at the institution. Overall, the situation as mapped with STAFF-DEV data highlights the variety of approaches that learning and teaching centres may adopt, although several of their main roles and functions are common to the vast majority of centres in Europe.

3.2. THE STAFF DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES IN PLACE

In an attempt to capture the dynamics at stake, the STAFF-DEV survey questionnaire makes a distinction between “formal” and “self-organised” staff development activities at HEIs:

- ❖ **“Formal”** opportunities are defined as organised by the institution with the purpose of enhancing teaching, with assigned learning objectives, and an assessment¹² upon completion.
- ❖ **“Self-organised”** opportunities should be understood as self-organised by individuals, groups of individuals or the institution with the purpose of enhancing teaching. Such opportunities are typically optional.

These two forms of staff development are obviously intertwined at times in institutions, for instance when training provides a platform for exchange between teachers, even after the training has been completed. STAFF-DEV data confirm that it is not easy to make a clear demarcation line between what qualifies as “formal” and what does not, notably because many activities organised by the institution are structured, but do not include any assessment upon completion.

3.2.1. Formal staff development opportunities

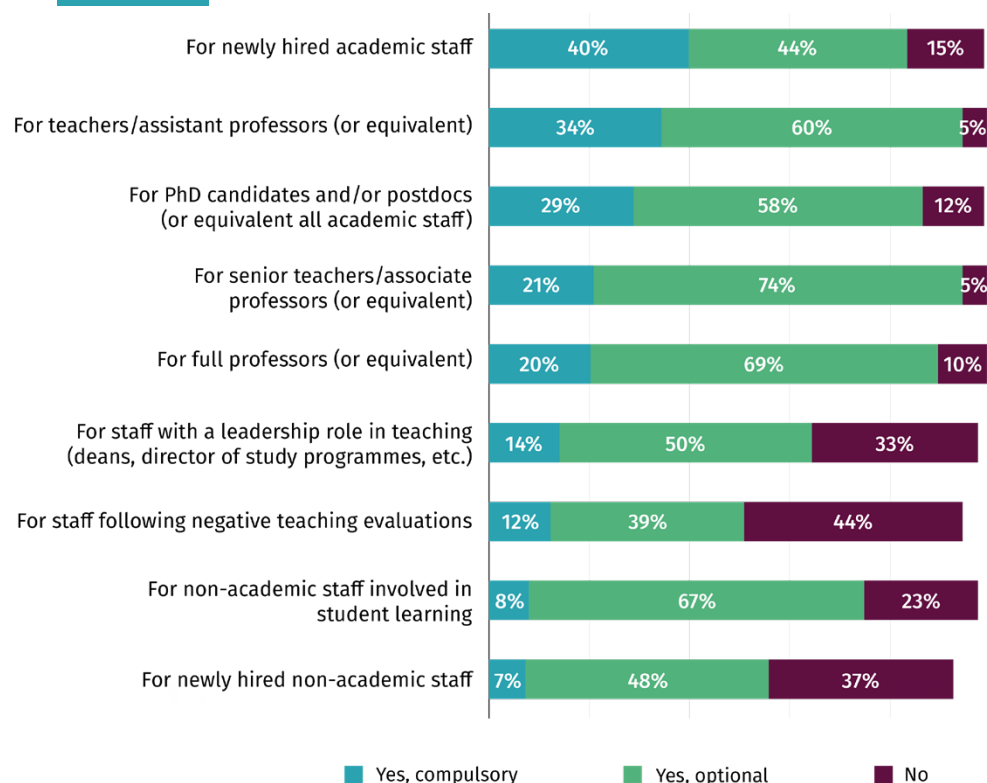
According to the Trends 2024 study, over 80% of HEIs offer some sort of training courses for teachers, the most common ones addressing digital skills and pedagogy/didactics (Gaebel and Zhang, 2024, p. 39). In STAFF-DEV, 96% of responding HEIs do offer formal staff development opportunities. The STAFF-DEV data also show that, overall, most formal staff development opportunities are offered as optional. When compulsory, they most often

address newly hired academic staff (at 40% of HEIs). However, the criteria for making such training compulsory seem to be based more on being a newcomer in the institution than on being a newcomer to the teaching profession. Staff development is less often compulsory for PhD candidates and/or postdocs (29%).

In the vast majority of HEIs, there is no direct correlation between receiving negative teaching evaluations and the obligation to undertake formal staff development: only 12% of HEIs make it compulsory in this case. In addition, 44% of HEIs do not offer formal staff development in such cases, implying that staff development is not considered to be a route for mitigating or remedying issues arising from problematic teaching.

Non-academic staff are rarely required to take formal staff development, whether or not they are newly hired. Most HEIs offer optional training for them, although up to 37% of institutions do not offer training for them at all. The STAFF-DEV survey does not provide enough data for further analysing the impact of this finding or linking it to the overall development of a learning and teaching strategy, which, ideally, should engage the whole institutional community involved in student learning. However, this shows a continuing trend, as Trends 2018 had already noted that non-academic teaching support staff (laboratory technicians, librarians, etc.) are required to participate in teaching enhancement courses at only 20% of HEIs surveyed, although they can take up to 50% of the teaching-related workload at 60% of HEIs (Gaebel and Zhang, 2018, p. 65, Fig. 29; p. 63, Fig. 27). More reflection on whether staff development activities should be extended to such support staff, and how, might be needed at HEIs.

¹² “Assessment” was defined in the questionnaire as “a general term embracing all methods used to judge the performance of an individual, group or organisation”. It is not equivalent to “evaluation”, which should be understood as “the process of examining and passing a judgement on the appropriateness or level of given standards” (see Annex 1 for the survey questionnaire, which includes a glossary).

FIGURE 9 Formal staff development opportunities offered

Q8. Does your institution organise formal staff development opportunities in learning and teaching (training, courses...), for the following categories of staff? N=162

HEIs also point to the difficulty in categorising any staff development activity as either compulsory or optional: there are numerous grey areas, and some national requirements may also come into the picture. For instance, courses may not be compulsory as such, yet teaching staff might be required to take them in the course of their career. A basic or introductory course may be compulsory, but more advanced staff development not, if the teacher holds a

teaching qualification encompassing such basic courses. National obligations may encompass a specific obligation to undertake a course if a teaching assistant does not have a PhD (Austria), or if a teacher does not hold a certain teaching qualification or does not have the teaching experience expected for a particular position. At the other end of the spectrum, in some countries it is not possible to make formal staff development compulsory (Portugal). Finally, it may also vary depending on faculty or department regulations and common practice; as one institution put it, “only a few departments have a comprehensive policy on staff development”. To summarise, the compulsory character of some staff development activities may encompass different approaches, but it generally seems attached to the status of the person taking it rather than to the course or training in question, and to the stage of career advancement and teaching experience rather than to the staff category of the person.

HEIs also report that there can be a wide variety of staff development formats and contents. In an attempt to group them by type or topic, the STAFF-DEV survey finds that, while some contents are very common at HEIs (such as the basic, introductory offerings on pedagogy and didactics in higher education), others are designed to fit the institution’s current priorities or its strategic goals. It is worth noting that student assessment comes second in the list of topics frequently addressed; this area is repeatedly highlighted as challenging, particularly in a learning outcome-based approach.¹³ Educational scholarship, broadly understood as scholarly activities related to learning and teaching with the aim of evaluating, enhancing and/or reflecting on teaching practices, is the topic of staff development activities at 31% of HEIs. It is also taken into account in academic assessment at 39% of HEIs. This shows the extent to which teaching is nowadays considered a scholarly activity by HEIs in the EHEA.

¹³ See, for example, Gaebel and Zhang (2024, p. 57). According to Trends 2024 data, designing student assessment in a way that aligns it with a learning outcome approach still causes problems at 27% of HEIs in the EHEA, and was a problem, but has been solved, in another 25% of HEIs. It should also be noted that in 24 out of 48 countries across the EHEA, there are legal requirements related to assessment methods for students (which specify compulsory types of assessment that all students, or all students in specific programmes, must undertake). This may limit HEIs’ and teachers’ flexibility in designing assessment (EC/EACEA/Eurydice, 2024, p. 171).

TABLE 2 Topics addressed in formal staff development

Introductory offerings (e.g. introduction to pedagogy/didactics, to university teaching, etc.)	81%
Student assessment and feedback (e.g. formative and summative assessment)	72%
Advanced offerings in teaching and supporting learning (e.g. digitally enhanced pedagogy, supervising student research, etc.)	69%
Educational design (e.g. curriculum design, using evaluation data for redesign, etc.)	66%
Responding to institutional priorities (e.g. fostering equality, diversity and inclusion in learning and teaching; interdisciplinarity, etc.)	58%
Educational management and leadership	46%
Educational scholarship (e.g. scholarship of teaching and learning, disciplinary-based education research, etc.)	31%

Q11. Which of the following topics does your formal staff development offer/address?
N=162

Among advanced offerings cited by HEIs, the most common area by far is digitalisation, including e-learning and assessment, digitally enhanced pedagogy, the use of various tools, from basic (Moodle) to advanced (artificial intelligence), and improving digital skills for both teachers and students. Other advanced offerings include topics related to learning design and pedagogy, as well as student support and teachers' personal competences (ranging from self-reflection on their own teaching to public speaking skills).

TABLE 3 Advanced offerings in teaching and supporting learning

Advanced topics	Number of HEIs citing it
Digitalisation related (skills, use of tools and methods)	50
Teaching styles, methods, approaches	28
Supervision	16
Inclusive and diverse classrooms	7
How to support students in their academic journey (academic methodology and literacy, building a competence portfolio, etc.)	5
Didactics	5
Sustainability, sustainable development	4
Self-reflection and assessment on own teaching	3
Teaching in English	3
Oral communication and presentation (body language, speech and voice training)	3
Intercultural communication	2
Copyright related to teaching material, Open Educational Resources (OER)	2
Curriculum design and assessment (incl. constructive alignment)	2
Teaching using learning analytics	1
Coordination in team teaching	1
Study material design	1

Q11 Which of the following topics does your formal staff development offer address?
Please select all applicable options. - Option "Advanced offerings — Please list the advanced topics that you are aware of." N=72

The definition of “formal” staff development provided in the STAFF-DEV survey includes assessment upon completion. Although 29% of HEIs comment that the norm at their institution would be formal staff development without assessment, most institutions still have a range of assessment measures in place. The most common assessment means is a teaching portfolio to document personal progression and reflection in teaching practice (51%).

TABLE 4 Assessment of formal staff development

Do you typically assess formal staff development...

With a teaching portfolio or similar, documenting progression and reflection in teaching practice	51%
With a final evaluation by those who delivered the course/training	44%
With a teaching project to be implemented in a classroom	30%
We do not organise any assessment upon completion	29%
With a final evaluation by a jury of peers	12%
With a dissertation or similar	10%
Other	9%

Q9. How do you typically assess formal staff development opportunities? N=162

Among the other possibilities for assessment cited are self-evaluations, open discussion opportunities at the end of the training, and the inclusion of an assessment aspect in formalised, yearly meetings (such as appraisals) with line managers (deans, etc.). The assessment part can also take place in a flexible way, i.e. a teacher has the opportunity to take it several times

upon completion of a course or training, until successful. Overall, the approaches cited seem closer to a validation process than relying on assessment methods as such. Assessment can also take the form of a continuum following the course or training; for instance, developing a pedagogical project upon completion of a course can be coupled with mentoring offered to support this, with peer observation and feedback provided to the teacher, and with a final seminar leading to the validation of the training module.

It should be noted that some HEIs are members of national or regional networks that focus on learning and teaching, which propose quality standards that can serve as a framework at the institution. This is the case, for instance, in Sweden, where the Association of Swedish Higher Education Institutions (SUHF) provides a national framework for assessing staff development, which includes guidelines for setting up courses with a form of individual assessment in an appropriate format, depending on the nature of the course. This is also the case in Germany, with the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Hochschuldidaktik*¹⁴ active at national level, and other regional networks such as the *Netzwerk Hochschuldidaktik for the region of Nord Rhein-Westfalen*.¹⁵

Do HEIs offer recognition for formal staff development in the form of credits (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) credits or equivalent)? The majority of institutions (53%) surveyed under STAFF-DEV do not allocate credits upon completion of formal staff development; only 17% of

We see courses as starting points for participation in communities of practice and for some colleagues to develop into leaders in learning and teaching in their fields. The concept of ‘stand-alone’ training is one we have stopped investing in. Instead, we invest in designing development with the aim of sustained transformation.

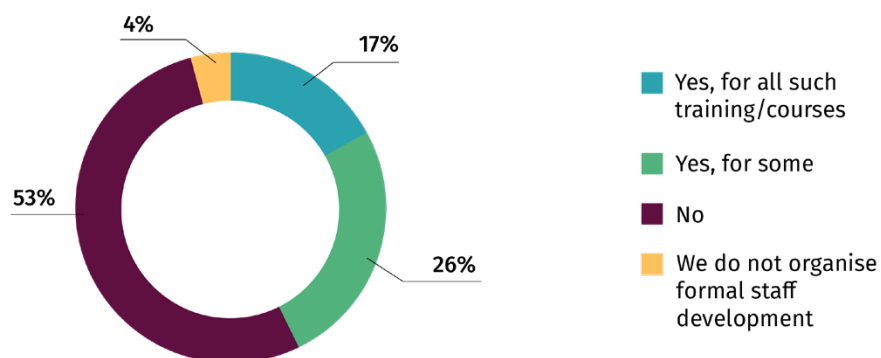
a STAFF-DEV responding institution

¹⁴ <https://www.dghd.de/>

¹⁵ <https://hd-nrw.de/>

them do so for all their training or courses, and another 26% for some of their training or courses. Moreover, allocating credits for formal staff development does not make a clear and significant difference to career progression: data show that where credits allocated to formal staff development are in place, HEIs are slightly more likely (by 10 percentage points) to account for these in the career progression of permanent and temporary academic staff.

FIGURE 10 Credits allocated to formal staff development

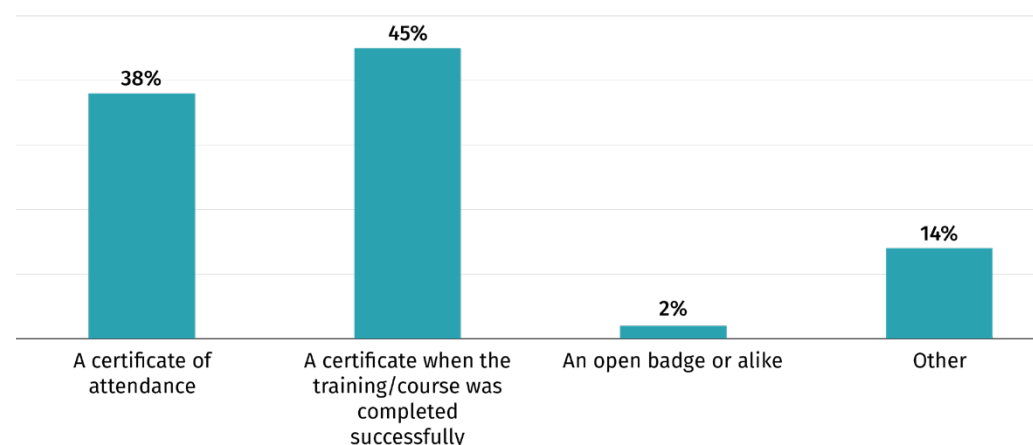


Q10. Does your institution allocate credits (ECTS or equivalent) to formal staff development formats? N=163

There are noticeable country trends in this overall picture. In Spain, half (50%) of HEIs do allocate credits for all their formal staff development opportunities. The percentage of HEIs offering credits for some training or courses is also significantly higher than average in Finland (83%), the UK (80%), Ireland (71%) and Switzerland (60%). At the other end of the spectrum, even fewer HEIs allocate credits for formal staff development in Italy (where 86% of HEIs do not do it at all), France (83%), Portugal (83%) and Germany (79%).

The number of credits allocated by HEIs varies widely, between small formats (1–3 ECTS credits) to much more substantial study programmes, or full teaching qualifications (equivalent to 240 ECTS credits). HEIs also offer alternatives to credit allocation upon completion of a formal staff development training or course. The most common form of such alternatives is a certificate of successful completion (in place at 45% of HEIs) or attendance (38%). Open badges or similar awards are very rare, and are evident mainly in Ireland.

FIGURE 11 Alternative awards upon completion of a training/course



Q10.2. Does your institution provide something else upon completion of a staff development training/course? N=84

HEIs provide examples of other alternatives to credit allocation, further illustrating how different approaches can be combined, and how staff development activities are considered as part of a continuum for enhancing teaching at institutions:

- ❖ Certificates of attendance are available for all those who took part in training or a course. In addition, teachers have the opportunity to be assessed through a portfolio and gain credits. If they are PhD candidates, such credits could also count for their study programme.
- ❖ In the same vein, credit allocation can be modular: for individual teachers, participation in each activity is recorded, and the amount of training or activities completed (in a certain order or not) can count towards a certificate or credit allocation if the teacher so wishes.
- ❖ HEIs have systems in place to record the attendance and completion of training or courses for each teacher. This may serve either yearly evaluations or discussions with the dean or head of department, or just be stored in the institution's performance evaluation system and contribute to institutional data collection.

Interestingly, the recognition status for formal staff development does not make any difference in terms of either enhancing or diminishing non-formal, self-organised staff development activities. STAFF-DEV data show that self-organised activities are in place at HEIs regardless of whether or not a formal staff development offer is present or credited. These self-organised activities are further examined in the next section.

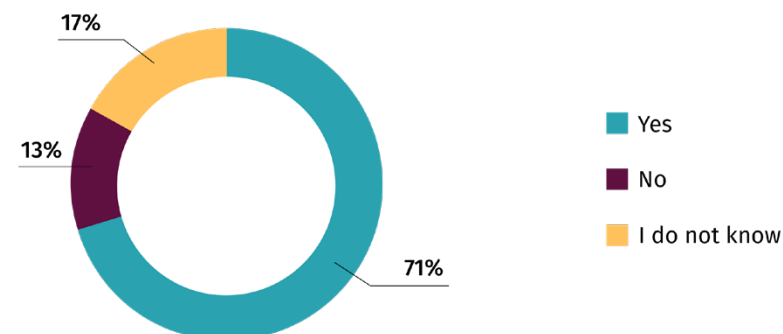
3.2.2. Beyond formal activities: towards a development-oriented teaching culture?

It is difficult to capture the range of different activities at institutions that are aimed at staff development and are organised in a way other than as training or courses. Some 71% of HEIs do count self-organised activities in staff development, with another 17% answering that they do not know. This is even more often the case at HEIs that have not developed any learning and teaching strategy: 86% of them have self-organised activities in place.

There are plenty of possibilities for staff members to develop their skills, not just formal staff development. For instance, our open university studies are free for staff members. It is difficult to list everything and development/training options also vary from year to year.

a STAFF-DEV responding institution

FIGURE 12 Self-organised activities



Q13. In your institution, are there self-organised staff development activities in learning and teaching? N=163

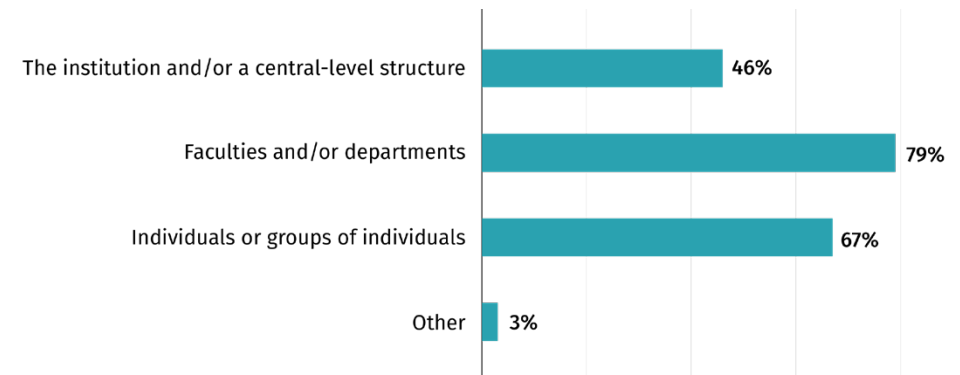
Self-organised activities range from any information or learning that the internet can offer (including Massive Open Online Courses or MOOCs) to much more structured activities, especially when these are organised at the central level of the institution itself, which is the case at 46% of HEIs. Examples of self-organised activities include:

- ❖ peer-to-peer observation (of teaching), job shadowing
- ❖ buddy systems, peer feedback, mentoring (e.g. between a more junior and a more senior staff member; language tandems)
- ❖ welcome reception or induction/welcome days at faculties for new teachers
- ❖ sharing of experience/knowledge from staff engaged in a more advanced training module
- ❖ projects funded under a scheme to support learning and teaching
- ❖ possibilities to apply to learning opportunities outside the institution (and ask for funding)
- ❖ learning communities, communities of practice, that can be discipline- or department-based
- ❖ learning events in faculties (seminars, workshops, etc.)
- ❖ topic-based discussion groups organised by teachers themselves, in various formats (onsite, online, lunch time, coffee time, reading clubs, etc.)
- ❖ topic- or discipline-based “skills development teams” of teachers
- ❖ educational research groups
- ❖ information and knowledge/experience sharing with colleagues when returning from an (international) event or training

- ❖ opportunity for teams of teachers or PhD candidates to request tailor-made sessions on specific aspects of pedagogy/didactics (to be organised by the learning and teaching centre)
- ❖ educational developers having “open office” hours for any teacher to walk in for informal explanations or assistance
- ❖ collaborations with external experts (e.g. practitioners in their field).

Many examples show how self-organised activities fulfil a demand for discipline-based, topic interest-based informal activities. In this regard, faculties and departments play an important role: they arrange such activities at 79% of HEIs where they take place.

FIGURE 13 Self-organised staff training arranged by...



Q13.1. Who typically organises such activities? N=115

The types of examples and comments from HEIs also confirm that while formal training may be of more general use and address a generic audience of teachers, less formal activities are used for specificities and immediate needs. Developing communities of practice based on informal activities may also attract more interest, and might work better if focusing on a topic of immediate concern, a problem that needs to be solved quickly, or simply a topic closer to the teachers' daily practice.

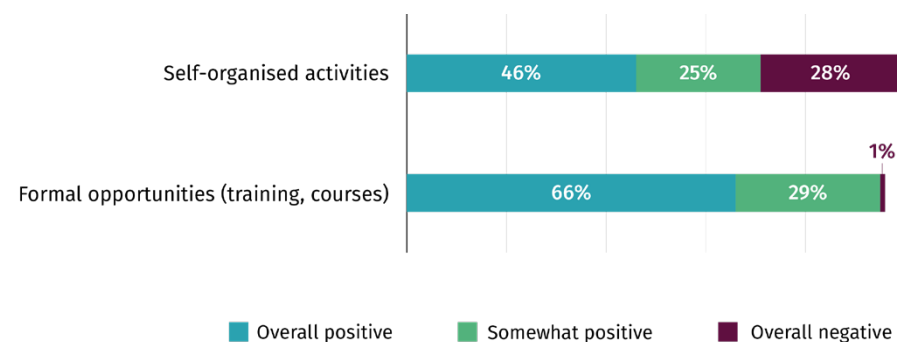
HEIs see a strong complementarity between formal and self-organised staff development activities. Formal training is seen as easier to communicate about: it is part of the institution's strategy, communication (including towards its own staff), and sometimes performance agreement, if any. It can be subject to legal and quality assurance requirements. It is structured, with defined learning outcomes and clear descriptions. It also addresses equal opportunities: it is a chance for everyone to engage with training directly connected to the institution's priorities. To complement this, more informal, self-organised activities can be more effective in the (self-)motivation of teachers and their personal growth, thus fostering a culture of continued enhancement at the institution. Self-organised activities also represent an opportunity to pursue more specific, personal or discipline-related interests. Moreover, several HEIs describe more informal activities as a place for inspiration and for testing new ideas and solutions. Informal activities might also be more useful if remediation is needed for teachers with negative performance evaluations; these teachers would feel more comfortable addressing difficulties in a more informal, peer-to-peer setting.

Some HEIs see self-organised activities as pathfinders that pave the way for formal training, or the way to remedy to what formal training cannot achieve. This is the case, for instance, in situations where formal training is limited, due to limited funding or capacity.¹⁶ Notably, informal activities can be developed and built on ad hoc project funding. Self-organised activities can also contribute to shaping and designing formal training, and can raise awareness of it. One institution comments that in general, teachers develop their networks and activities on innovative teaching within and outside the university, and formal staff development activities are organised at the institution to share these experiences with colleagues.

Overall, formal and self-organised activities probably work in a loop in which they reinforce each other. One institution describes it as a situation of mutual benefit: the more formal training there is, the more informal activities will appear, and the overall value of staff development in teaching will be better

acknowledged. Issues raised during formal training could, for instance, be followed up in more informal activities. This is not entirely consensual: other HEIs also state that informal activities are considered as a “little extra” with limited impact. Generally, HEIs observe that the feedback provided by participants is more positive towards formal activities than self-organised ones, with the caveat that HEIs do not systematically collect feedback for self-organised activities.

FIGURE 14 Feedback from participants



Q17. Based on feedback received, how are staff development opportunities perceived by those who participated in them? N=155

¹⁶ Quoting one responding institution: “[Formal] trainings are seen as a privilege: only doctoral candidates are allowed to take them, after discussing with their supervisor.”

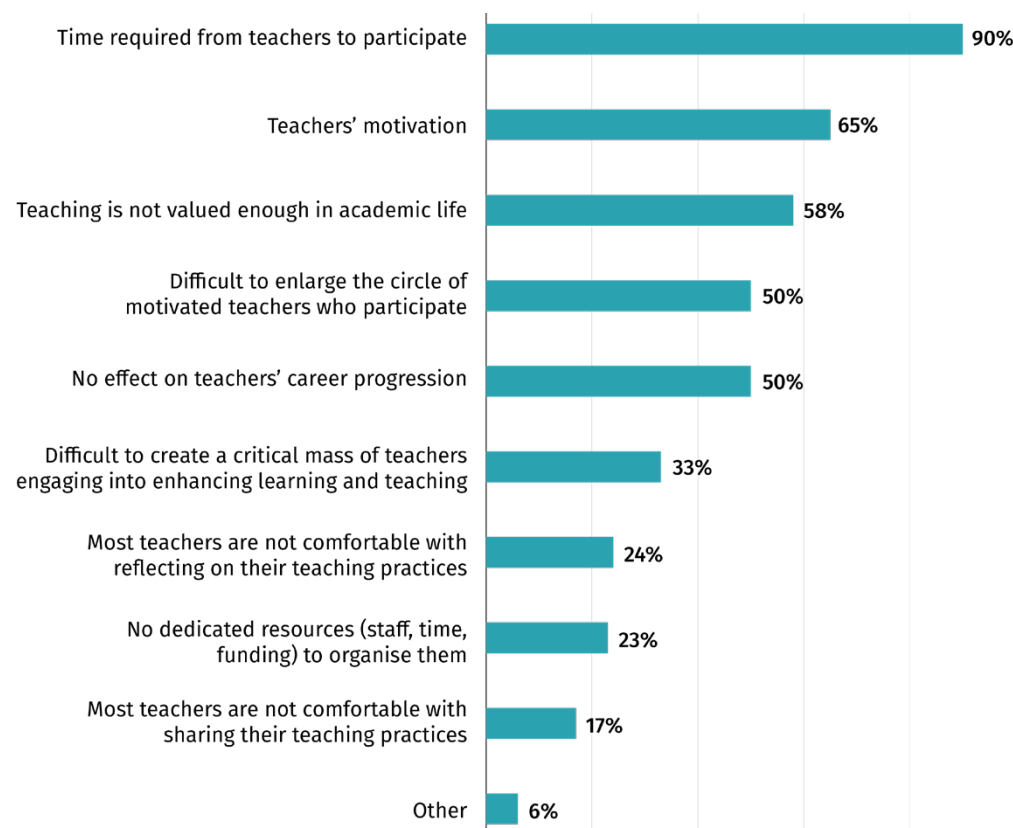
What is certain is that the complementarity between various different forms of staff development creates and sustains a culture of teaching that is geared towards development for individuals and enhancement for the institution. Such complementarity is useful for addressing different needs and demands, ranging from a baseline offer available for all staff to more specific, discipline-related and needs-related demands. The role of institutional leadership in recognising existing informal activities and enhancing them is seen as crucial — but also as a challenge at times. As phrased by one institution, what challenges the organisation of staff development is at times the lack of understanding shown by university management, which fails to see the connection between staff development and quality enhancement for the whole institution.

There is a too narrow focus on metrics and indicators. This often overlooks the real impact on the quality of studies, the value of innovation in pedagogy and generating new ideas in learning and teaching. This cannot always be measured in numbers. As a result, the true value of these activities is sometimes underestimated.

a STAFF-DEV responding institution

HEIs also identify the lack of time for teachers to participate as the main challenge for proposing and organising staff development; this is the case at 90% of HEIs. Other significant challenges relate to teachers' motivation (at 65% of HEIs), teaching not being valued enough in academic life or the disparity of esteem for teaching (58%), the lack of effect on teachers' career progression (50%) and the difficulty of enlarging the circle of motivated teachers (50%).

FIGURE 15 Challenges to proposing and organising staff development



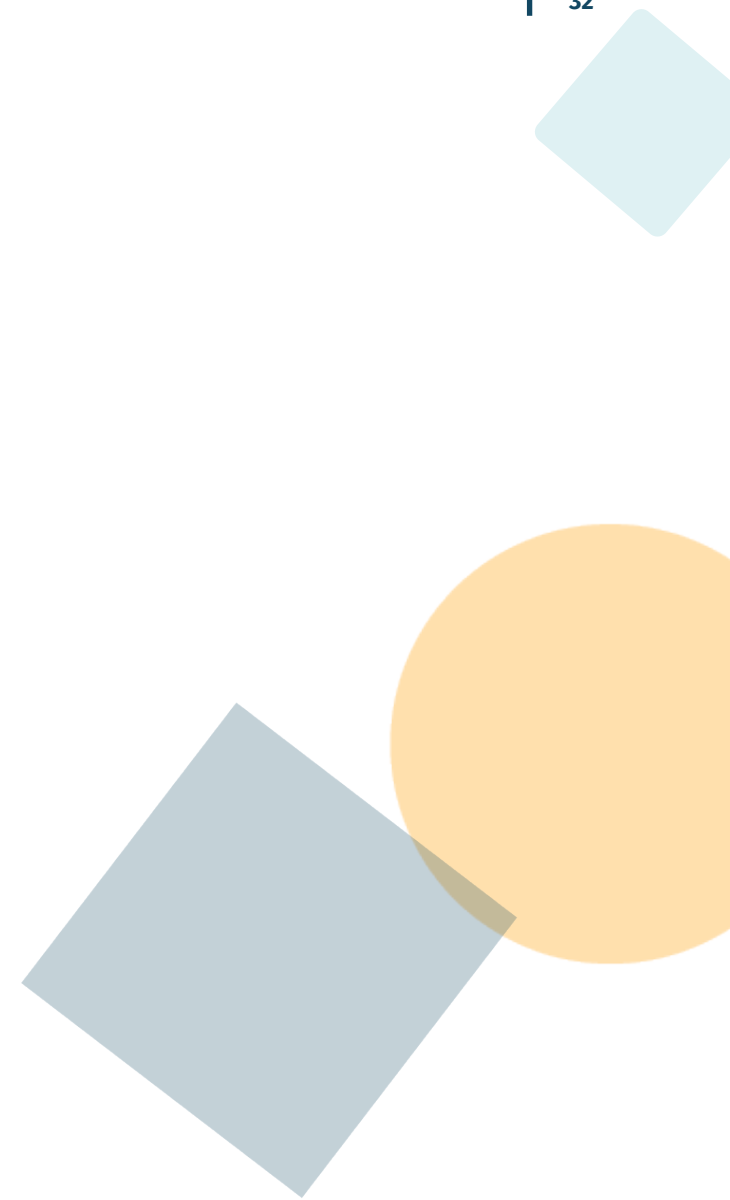
Q16. In your opinion, what are the challenges in proposing and organising formal staff development opportunities? N=163

The OECD 2024 evidence review on academic careers presents a useful typology of multiple approaches to managing professional learning¹⁷ in higher education (OECD, 2024, p. 40):

1. self-management, where academics are individually responsible for enhancing their skills and knowledge, seeking opportunities to learn, and deciding what learning might be acquired for career advancement;
2. team management, in a group context within one field or administrative unit, with mentoring, peer-learning and apprenticeship-like relationships taking place and mixing more junior and senior academics as well as various administrative and managerial roles;
3. centralised management, in which professional learning is institutionalised within an HEI, or even at regional or national level; this might take the form of learning and teaching centres, formal qualifications and national associations.

The STAFF-DEV survey questionnaire focused more on centralised management and, to some extent, team management in the case of staff development in teaching. However, data also show that these three management levels are, in fact, closely intertwined at HEIs, with types of activity complementing each other, and underlying principles geared towards self-management and personal development (compulsory character of formal training depending on the stage of career advancement, self-organised activities described as important for personal growth), as well as the institutional teaching culture (with formal courses addressing the institution's priorities, for instance). The self-management side of staff development should not be overlooked: in a context where little is compulsory and where recognition of teaching through careers can still be improved (see Chapter 4), developing self-awareness and reflection towards one's own teaching is crucial in engaging individuals in an enhancement-led path and in turning the institution's teaching culture towards continuous improvement.

¹⁷ This review defined “professional learning” as encompassing “not only formal professional development, but also formal or non-formal learning in the form of one-off interactions or more prolonged, continuous, and linked activities”. The dedicated section in the report focuses mainly on teaching skills.



Chapter 4

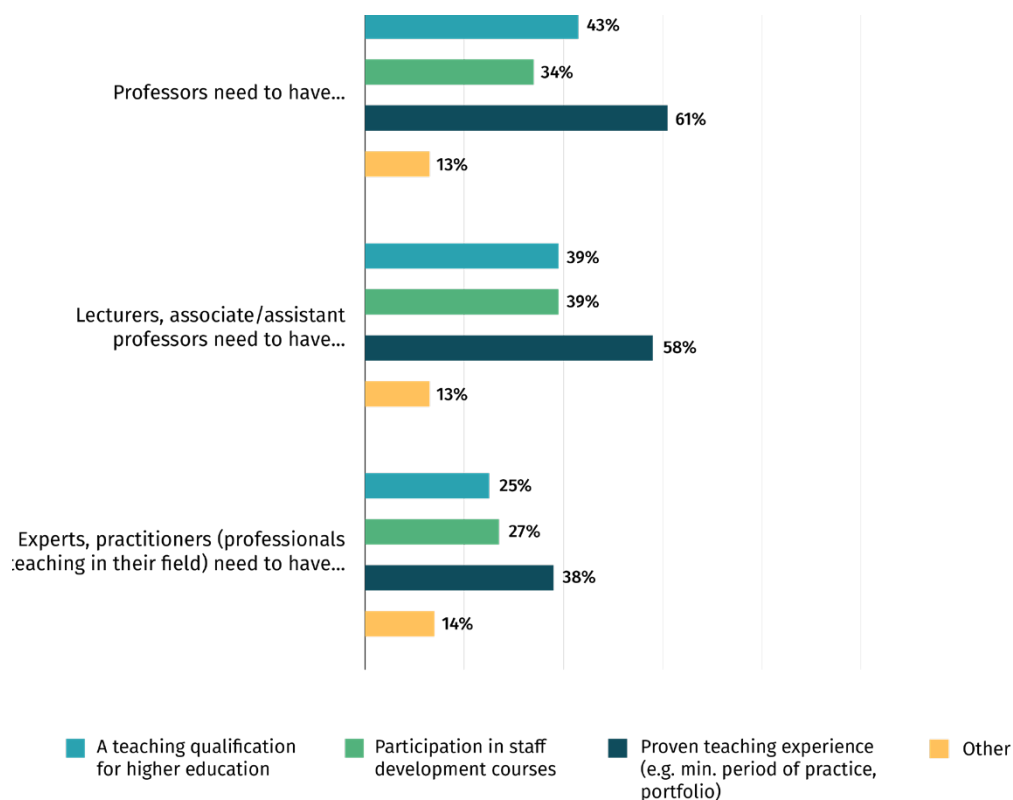
Staff development, recognition for teaching and career progression

The overall issue of teaching not being properly valued in academia is unsurprising, as it has been abundantly documented in literature and in practice. Academic assessment and career progression are still dominated by research-oriented and quantitative indicators, and efforts to enhance teaching may not be acknowledged as useful or impactful, either in individual teachers' career progression or in the overall academic culture (see, for instance, OECD, 2024, p. 10, p. 33 and Gaebel and Zhang, 2024, p. 40). In order to fully reach their potential, staff development measures need to be embedded in an institutional (and national) environment that provides proper and visible recognition for the intrinsic value of teaching, and includes concrete measures to recognise this value through assessment and career progression.

This chapter explores what HEIs have in place to connect staff development with career progression.

4.1. THE INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK IN PLACE

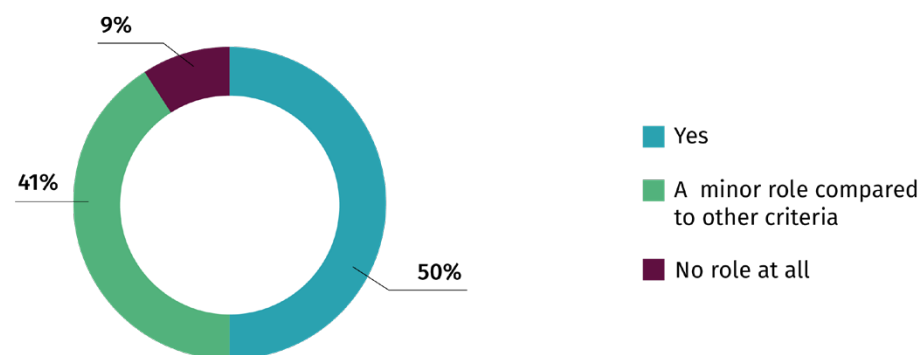
As mentioned in Chapter 3, HEIs may consider formal staff development as a way to offer common, baseline grounds for teaching at their institution. This appears to be a necessary approach, given that those with teaching responsibilities may not all have had the same initial training on higher education teaching when starting in their position. For lecturers and associate or assistant professors, the most common requirement requested is proven teaching experience (for 58% of HEIs). Previous participation in staff development is a requirement at 39% of HEIs, and the same percentage of HEIs request a teaching qualification for higher education for this group of teaching staff. This general trend varies between countries: in the Netherlands, for example, it is mandatory to have the University Teaching Qualification (UTQ) to hold a permanent position for teaching; alternatively, this needs to be acquired within two years following appointment. For professors, having participated in staff development is required in only 34% of HEIs, and proven teaching experience is required in 61% of HEIs.

FIGURE 16 Requirements for holding a position with teaching responsibilities

Q19. In your institution, what requirements should be met for holding a position with teaching responsibilities? N=163

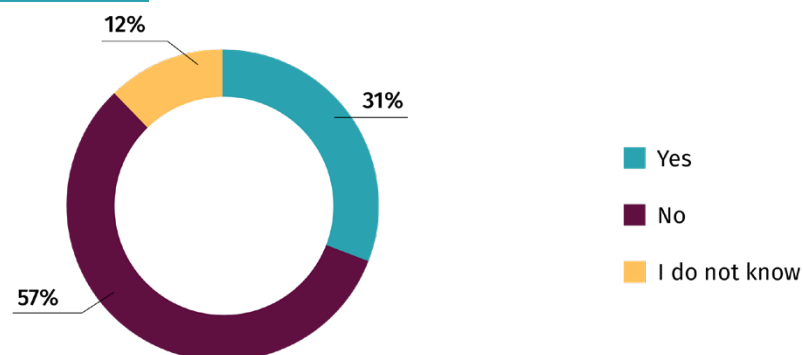
According to Trends 2024, teaching performance evaluations do not play any role in career progression at only 9% of HEIs in the EHEA. However, at another 41% of institutions, they play only a minor role compared with other criteria, and are mostly dedicated to research outcomes. While this may appear to

be a favourable picture in which progress has been made on institutional regulations for better recognising teaching, varied implementation practices are still observed at faculties and departments (Gaebel and Zhang, 2024, pp. 40–41).

FIGURE 17 Role of performance evaluations in career progression (from Trends 2024)

Q34. Do teaching performance evaluations play an important role in the promotion and career progression of teaching staff? Please choose one answer. N=484

When designing and organising staff development that will somehow be counted for career progression, some institutions use a professional development framework, which can be structured by competences, career stages and/or types of teaching activities. However, this is not a widespread practice, as only 31% of HEIs in the EHEA use such a framework. There are significant country differences in this regard: all (100%) HEIs in the UK use a professional competence framework, as do 90% of HEIs in Sweden and 57% of HEIs in Ireland. In contrast, none of the Italian HEIs use one, and nor do 83% of HEIs in Portugal, 80% of HEIs in Switzerland and 78% of HEIs in Czechia.

FIGURE 18 Professional development frameworks

Q20. In your institution, is there a professional development framework used as a reference for staff development in learning and teaching? N=162

Most HEIs that use a professional competence framework as a reference for staff development have designed their own institutional framework, or adapted an existing one to their own needs. In the UK, Advance HE (and before it was created, the Higher Education Academy) proposes a Professional Standards Framework¹⁸ that has been well established in the higher education sector for decades and is widely used. This framework has also inspired HEIs outside the UK. In Sweden, the Swedish Association of Higher Education Institutions offers guidelines that cover many aspects of formal training as well as the minimum requirements attached to them.¹⁹ In Germany, the German Association for Academic (Staff) and Educational Development proposes “competence profiles”²⁰ that can be useful to formulate competences for those holding teaching responsibilities.

18 <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/uk-professional-standards-framework-ukpsf>

19 <https://suhf.se/in-english/>

20 https://www.dghd.de/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Rollen-_und_Kompetenzprofile_fuer_hochschuldidaktisch_Taetige_final.pdf

HEIs using an institutional professional competence framework also take inspiration from scholarly work to design theirs. Ruth Graham’s teaching framework²¹ is cited in this context, with a taxonomy articulated between several competences. Research conducted by Ester van Dijk and colleagues²² in the Netherlands, and based on teachers’ tasks, is also referred to, as is Ronald Harden’s model of eight roles for a medical teacher²³ and education competences identified in the Tuning project.²⁴

Using a professional development framework may help to structure the different staff development offers that exist at the institution. Indeed, STAFF-DEV data show that HEIs that use it as a reference for staff development are more likely to have formal activities targeting different stages of a career.

4.2. STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND CAREER PROGRESSION

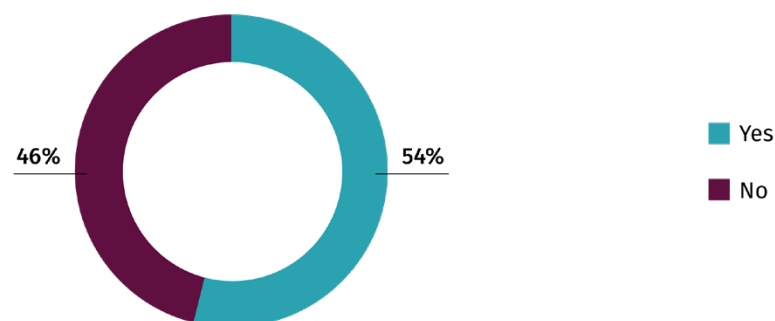
About half of HEIs (54%) organise their formal staff development such that different offers and formats target different stages of a teacher’s career. This is far more common in Austria (88% of HEIs), Finland (80%), Sweden (80%), the UK (80%) and Ireland (71%), than in, for instance, Czechia (where 78% of HEIs do not have this) or Portugal (67%).

21 <https://www.teachingframework.com/framework/>

22 <https://www.onderwijskennis.nl/sites/onderwijskennis/files/media-files/What%20makes%20an%20expert%20university%20teacher.pdf> and <https://www.onderwijskennis.nl/sites/onderwijskennis/files/media-files/What%20makes%20an%20expert%20university%20teacher.pdf>

23 <https://shop.elsevier.com/books/the-eight-roles-of-the-medical-teacher/harden/978-0-7020-6895-9>

24 <https://www.unideusto.org/tuningeu/competences/especific/education/>

FIGURE 19 Formal staff development targeting different stages of a career

Q22. In your institution, are there different types of formal staff development opportunities targeted at different stages of a career? N=160

Generally, many HEIs emphasise the importance of staff development as a proper introduction to the job and/or the institution, with a training offer upon starting to teach, or to be completed within a defined time period after starting the job. This corroborates the fact that it is also more frequent that HEIs make formal training compulsory for newcomers at the institution (see section 3.2.1). This is visible even in the language used to describe such offers. As one institution puts it, “we have a programme for newly hired teaching staff, and a general catalogue for all staff”.

Additionally, more advanced offers in formal staff development would typically address more experienced teachers. This scaling of offers can be structured according to academic positions (students as teaching assistants, PhD candidates, postdocs, early-career academics, more established positions) or

For temporary staff, like part-time or full-time instructors, participation in staff development activities is important to understand the culture of teaching at the university.

a STAFF-DEV responding institution

based on the role of the person (leadership roles, thesis supervisors, deans, heads of department, etc.). Another way to structure the different offers is to take experience in teaching as a criterion (for instance, teachers with less than five years of experience and teachers with more than five years). Some more advanced courses may require the completion of previous courses. At HEIs that recognise teaching qualifications as a form of staff development, there can also be different types of qualification based on experience. For instance, in the Netherlands, the University Teaching Qualification is required for all teachers, but there is also a Senior Teaching Qualification available for those willing to prove that they also contribute to organising and innovating education.²⁵ In the UK, institutions can offer to teachers to complete a postgraduate certificate in academic practice (PGCAP), before progressing to a postgraduate diploma in academic practice (PGDAP) and a full Master’s in academic practice (MA AP). Some HEIs may also expect academic staff to specialise in a defined area, or initiate or develop something specific and related to their teaching, before promotion to a full professorship.

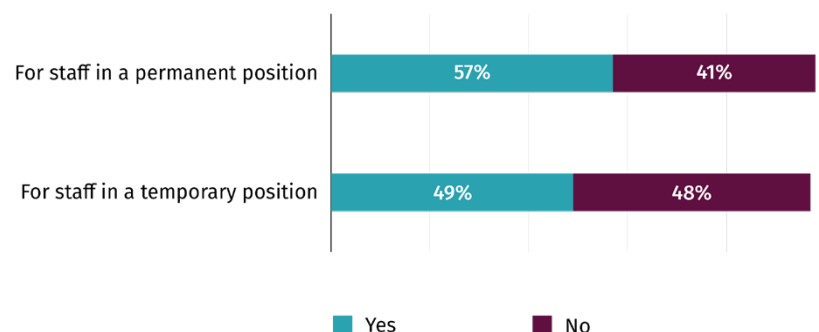
HEIs note that while early-stage or new academic staff may be more willing or motivated to take part in staff development, promotion and career progression need to be an incentive for more senior staff to participate. This may explain why a slightly higher percentage of HEIs count staff development for career progression for permanent staff, compared to those that count staff development for career progression for temporary staff. Staff development counts towards career progression for temporary teaching staff in all (100%) HEIs in Flanders (Belgium FL), and in the vast majority of HEIs in Poland (89%), Finland (83%), Spain (83%) and the UK (80%). In contrast, it does not count towards career progression for either permanent or temporary staff in any of the Italian institutions. Staff development for temporary staff also counts in significantly fewer HEIs than average in France (17% of HEIs), Portugal (17%), Czechia (25%), Germany (29%) and Ireland (29%). For early-stage academics (PhD candidates, teaching assistants and junior academic staff members),

²⁵ See, for instance, <https://www.uu.nl/en/education/centre-for-academic-teaching-and-learning/teacher-development/utq-and-stq> and <https://tlc.uva.nl/en/article/senior-teaching-qualification-stq/>

there may be more obligations to undergo training and show evidence of it for promotion or for seeking a permanent position.

Countries where most HEIs take into account staff development in the career progression of permanent staff are Finland (all — 100% of HEIs), the UK (100%), Sweden (90%) and Poland (89%). In contrast, it is less often counted for permanent staff in Germany (14% of HEIs), Portugal (17%), Czechia (37%) and Switzerland (40%). Overall, from the sample examined under STAFF-DEV, Finland, Poland and the UK are countries where staff development in teaching is better integrated into career progression.

FIGURE 20 Staff development in career progression



Q21. In your institution, do formal staff development opportunities count for the career progression of academic staff? N=160

A closer examination of examples demonstrates that, while clear expectations and criteria for staff development formulated in personnel policy are quite standard, the demarcation line between what is required for career progression and what is considered an asset can be a fine one. In this regard, the following are typical examples:

- ❖ There is a general criterion on “excellence in teaching” for career progression, without a specific focus on staff development. Teachers will

have multiple ways to demonstrate that they meet the criterion, with undertaking staff development as one of the possible means among others. Formal staff development, in particular, can be an easy way to show evidence against such criteria.

- ❖ Staff development is not directly taken into account in assessment and career progression, yet HEIs would strongly incentivise teachers to undertake it (quoting one institution: “You are not likely to be promoted without”).
- ❖ Professional development opportunities are discussed during staff appraisal interviews. Such development is not taken into account in assessment, but is taken into account as part of the overall progression examined on that occasion.

Yet, some HEIs have regulations in place that imply obligations if teachers are to progress in their careers. Examples include the following:

- ❖ A teaching qualification is required for applying for promotion.
- ❖ A minimum number of ECTS credits gained through training is mandatory to access a permanent position.
- ❖ For junior staff, a minimum number of positive teaching performance evaluations or further training in university didactics or pedagogy may be required for career progression.
- ❖ For teaching assistants, a certificate of attendance for formal training is regularly required for renewing their temporary contract.
- ❖ All staff are required to take a minimum number of credits on didactics/ pedagogy over a defined number of years. This is linked to a progression path, which can be modulated depending on the position (e.g. a PhD candidate would need to take 5 ECTS credits; more senior staff between 5 and 10, etc.). This can be more flexible at some HEIs, where formal training could be replaced by other activities (such as teaching projects).

- ❖ Staff development in teaching is part of individual teaching performance agreements, which are reviewed yearly and can include several elements (training and/or teaching projects, portfolio, etc.).
- ❖ The career promotion model at the institution includes learning outcomes related to learning and teaching. Staff need to fulfil them before progression to the next position.

To summarise, the processes in which staff development can be taken into account and need to be documented are typically:

1. when academic staff start their position
2. in the context of a periodic evaluation
3. on renewal of their contract in the case of temporary staff
4. when moving from a temporary to a permanent status.

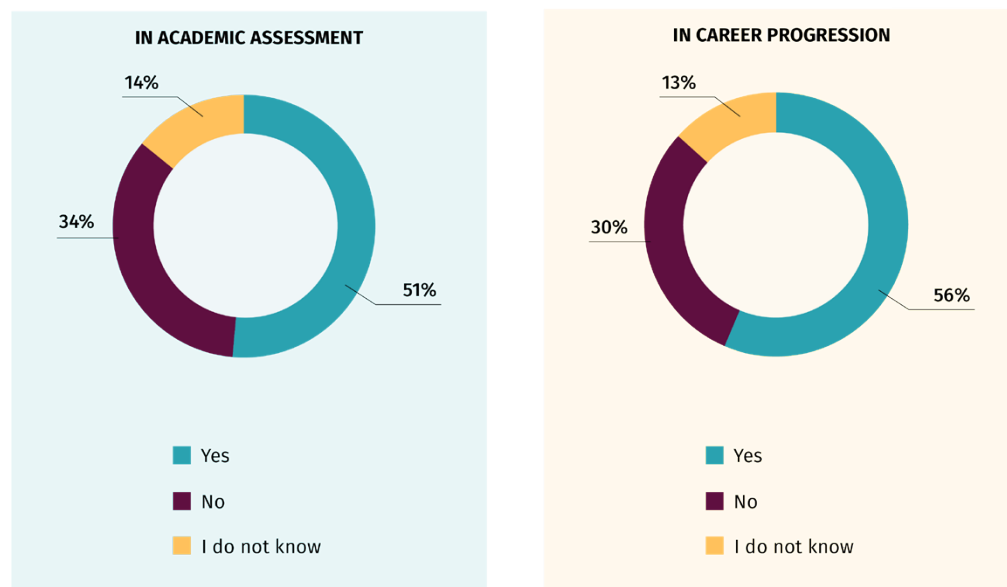
For promotion, typical examples of criteria include:

- ❖ evidence of formal training
- ❖ evidence of peer observation in teaching
- ❖ positive student feedback, teaching performance evaluations
- ❖ evidence of innovation in teaching
- ❖ engagement in and demonstrated contribution to educational scholarship
- ❖ teaching experience, at national and/or international level.

The wealth of situations where teaching enhancement is accounted for in some way can be seen as positive. Still, considering that 96% of the HEIs surveyed under STAFF-DEV do offer formal staff development, the percentage

of institutions where this does not counted towards career progression is appalling. Moreover, navigating through the various and sometimes ad hoc regulations and incentive mechanisms can be complex, especially if these vary depending on faculties and differ within the same institution.

An additional step in teachers' careers is when they engage in leadership in teaching. In the STAFF-DEV survey, this is defined as both the agency of individuals to develop strategic oversight, coordination and implementation of learning and teaching, and the institutional collective capacity to address organisational development towards enhancement. Two main profiles of leaders in teaching can be identified at HEIs: leaders with a specific role and related responsibilities (vice-rectors, deans, study programme directors, etc.), and particularly active and motivated teachers or other staff, who contribute to the development of communities of practice in learning and teaching. Over half of institutions do take leadership in teaching into account for academic assessment and career progression.

FIGURE 21 Leadership in teaching and career progression

Q23. Do leadership responsibilities in teaching play a role in academic assessment and career progression? N=163

In this area, too, there are noticeable differences between countries:

- ❖ Leadership responsibilities play a role in academic assessment in most institutions in Armenia (75% of HEIs), Poland (75%), Belgium FL (67%) and Spain (67%). They play no role in more institutions than the EHEA average in Austria (75% of HEIs do not take them into account) and Ireland (67%).
- ❖ Leadership responsibilities play a role in career progression in all institutions (100%) in the UK and in most institutions in Ireland (86%), Belgium FL (83%), France (83%) and Switzerland (80%). They play no role at 75% of Austrian HEIs and 67% of Czech HEIs.

The previous “Leadership and Organisation for Teaching and Learning at European Universities” (LOTUS) project²⁶ showed that, while leadership in teaching has not (yet) clearly emerged as a topic for discussion and further action in most EHEA countries, HEI representatives may already identify it as a possible way to catalyse strategic reflection for enhancing learning and teaching (EUA, 2022, p. 21). What the STAFF-DEV data add to this is that in the matter of incentivising such reflection, HEIs in some countries have already factored this into academic assessment and career progression.²⁷

In addition, HEIs propose other measures to support leaders in teaching. Optional training is the most common measure, shared by 71% of HEIs.

Among other measures cited, HEIs sometimes offer a different career path or track with a focus on teaching, with, for instance, the opportunity to access professorship in learning and teaching. This is the case in Poland, where there is a specific path for professors dedicated to teaching — which also implies for them more training in teaching. HEIs also cite performance bonuses or financial compensations generally attached to leadership in teaching. The importance of time allocation, whether for undertaking specific training or for dedicating a proportion of the workload to leadership in teaching, is reflected by the fact that 34–42% of HEIs have measures in place to address this. However, time allocation, where available, might not be applied across the whole institution, but may vary between faculties.

²⁶ <https://www.eua.eu/our-work/projects/eu-funded-projects/lotus.html>

²⁷ The importance of specifically focusing on leadership in teaching is nevertheless still to be demonstrated at times, including among academic staff. As one institution puts it, “We offered a few optional courses in leadership in teaching a few years ago, but we discontinued them, because the interest was low.”

TABLE 5 Other support measures for leaders in teaching

Optional training	71%
Selective development opportunities (upon application)	45%
Support to undertake training or competence development offered by other institutions or organisations (funding, time allocation, etc.)	42%
A platform for meeting and exchanging with other leaders in teaching	39%
Time allocation (e.g. ratio of workload defined as dedicated to leadership in teaching)	34%
Opportunities for sabbaticals dedicated to learning and teaching	20%
Compulsory training related to leadership in teaching (e.g. leadership development programme or scheme)	15%
Other	6%

Q25. Besides career progression, what does your institution provide to leaders with responsibilities in teaching? N=162



Conclusions and ways forward

The STAFF-DEV survey data show a comprehensive picture of staff development across the EHEA. While staff development is mostly organised by HEIs, national initiatives are acknowledged as useful and needed, notably for initiating changes and providing directions for future developments in learning and teaching. Staff development is in place at the vast majority of HEIs, with differently scaled offers addressing different stages of career in about half of them. Most institutions have learning and teaching strategies in place, where staff development is visible and seen as a contribution to the quality of learning and teaching. Institutions also have support structures such as learning and teaching centres in place. Faculties and departments play an important role, especially for discipline-related content and interests, or simply because they are the institutional unit closest to the teachers. Teachers' engagement in staff development to improve their teaching is accounted for in their academic assessment and career progression in about half of institutions.

From this picture, it is evident that staff development should be seen as part of a teaching ecosystem that encompasses and ties together the institution's strategy and priorities for learning and teaching (ideally through a participatory approach that engages the whole university community), adequate support structures, relevant offerings and, importantly, recognition for the time and effort dedicated to improving teaching. The overall value of staff development very much depends on the value that institutions grant to the teaching activity as part of the academic profession.

However, the STAFF-DEV survey findings identify some loose ends in this ecosystem approach. For instance, non-academic staff involved in student learning are often not considered in staff development activities. Reviewing their needs and expectations against their role may be helpful for properly acknowledging teaching as a collective activity at the institution, requiring coordination and foresight. Likewise, the way teaching plays a role in career progression is not always clear, and there may be a blurring between what is compulsory, what is an incentive and what is optional yet

still expected from individual teachers. This is a point that institutions should carefully look into, as it may impact on teachers' motivation to engage in self-reflection on and enhancement of their teaching, in a context where those organising staff development consider the time required for participation to be the most important challenge.

What the survey was not able to fully capture is what is happening at those institutions that have some measures and staff development activities in place, yet have not explored the full range of useful interactions between strategies, measures and incentives, support provided, and recognition available for enhancement practices. What would those institutions say is still missing? What would be useful to them to further support learning and teaching? What would be needed, at the EHEA level, to enhance existing situations?

Moreover, and importantly, while the survey offers an overview of how staff development is organised, with various degrees of maturation in establishing structures or practices, it is not possible yet to reach a full understanding of what works and following which directions, at the level of the EHEA, or to predict how the impact of good practices and relevant approaches could be maximised, and even mainstreamed.

This report is the first outcome of the STAFF-DEV project and will inform the project's next steps and activities. The thematic peer-learning activities and the series of master classes on how to organise staff development, in 2025 and 2026, will further address such needs and questions. It is also the project partners' ambition to draw on lessons learnt from STAFF-DEV to propose a set of key messages or recommendations, as a contribution to institutional, national and European policy making in the area of learning and teaching.



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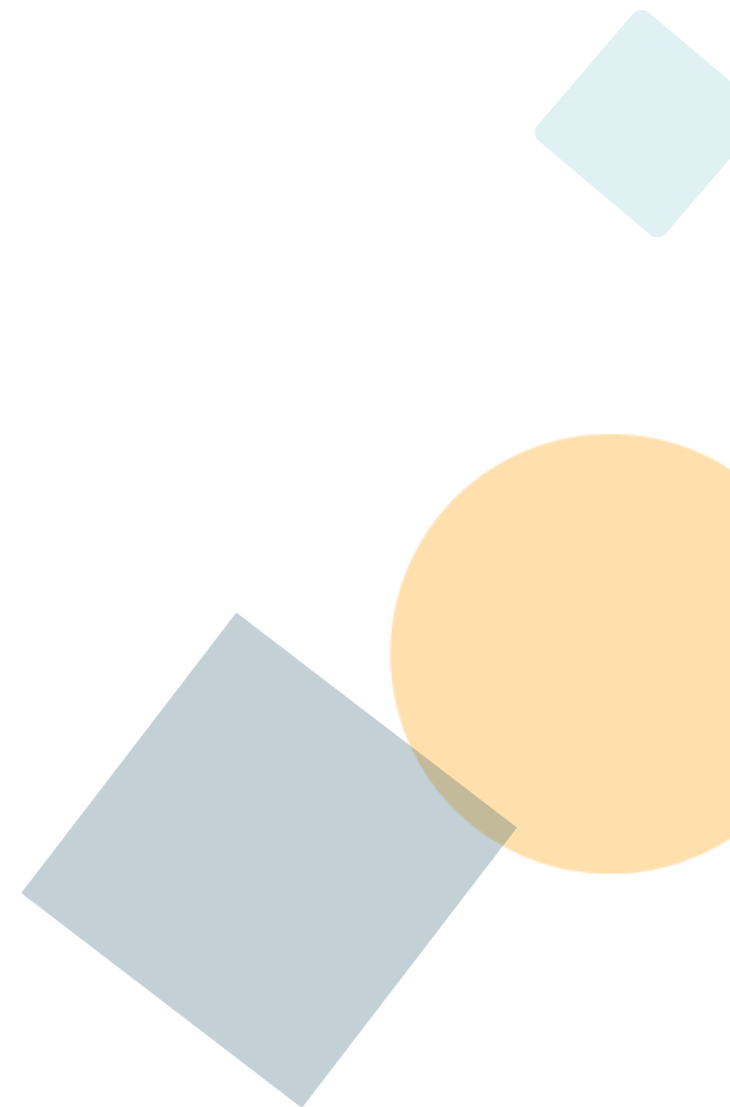
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Annex I

The STAFF-DEV survey questionnaire



THE FULL SURVEY
QUESTIONNAIRE
IS AVAILABLE VIA
THIS QR CODE

<https://bit.ly/49YpCnL>

Annex II

List of contributing institutions

The following HEIs participated in the STAFF-DEV survey and agreed to be listed by name. An additional 21 institutions participated in the survey but preferred not to be listed. For a map with the number of all responding institutions per country, see Figure 1.

Albania

Epoka University

Andorra

University of Andorra

Armenia

Armenian National Agrarian University

Armenian State University of Economics

Goris State University

National Polytechnic University of Armenia

National University of Architecture and Construction of Armenia

Northern University

Public Administration Academy of the Republic of Armenia

Austria

Graz University of Technology

Johannes Kepler University of Linz

Medical University of Graz

St Pölten University of Applied Sciences

University of Graz
University of Veterinary Medicine Vienna
University of Vienna
Vienna University of Economics and Business

Azerbaijan

Western Caspian University

Belgium

Arteveldehogeschool, University of Applied Sciences
Free University Brussels (VUB)
Ghent University
Hasselt University
KU Leuven
University of Antwerp
University of Mons

Croatia

University of Rijeka

Cyprus

European University Cyprus
University of Nicosia

Czechia

Academy of Fine Arts in Prague
Charles University
Masaryk University
Mendel University in Brno
The Janáček Academy of Performing Arts
VŠB – Technical University of Ostrava

Denmark

Copenhagen Business School

Estonia

Estonian Academy of Arts
Tartu Health Care College

Finland

Åbo Akademi University
Hanken School of Economics
Turku University of Applied Sciences
University of Jyväskylä
University of Vaasa

France

Avignon University
Jean Monnet University
Sorbonne University
University of Bordeaux
University of Lille

Georgia

David Tvildiani Medical University
Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University
Petre Shotadze Tbilisi Medical Academy

Germany

Darmstadt University of Technology
Humboldt University of Berlin
Munich University of Applied Sciences
RheinMain University of Applied Sciences
Technical University of Berlin
TH Köln - University of Applied Sciences
Trier University of Applied Sciences
University of Duisburg-Essen
University of Wuppertal

Greece

Democritus University of Thrace
University of Patras
University of the Aegean
University of Western Macedonia

Holy See

Pontifical Gregorian University

Ireland

Munster Technological University
Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland University of
Medicine and Health Sciences
University College Cork
University College Dublin
University of Galway
University of Limerick

Italy

University of Cagliari
University of Florence
University of Palermo

Kazakhstan

Karaganda Medical University

Latvia

Biznesa augstskola Turība
Riga Stradins University
University of Latvia
Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences

Lithuania

Lithuanian University of Health Sciences
Vilnius University

Moldova

Nicolae Testemitanu State University of Medicine
and Pharmacy of the Republic of Moldova

Netherlands

University of Arts - Royal Conservatoire
University of Groningen
Utrecht University

North Macedonia

South East European University

Norway

Kristiania University College
University of Agder
University of Oslo

Poland

The Jagiellonian University
University of Silesia in Katowice
University of Warsaw
Uniwersytet Medyczny w Białymstoku
Warsaw University of Life Sciences
Warsaw University of Technology
Wrocław University of Economics and Business
Wrocław University of Environmental and Life
Sciences
Wrocław University of Science and Technology

Portugal

NOVA University of Lisbon
University of Lisbon
University of Minho
University of Porto
University of Trás-os-Montes and Alto Douro

Romania

“Dunărea de Jos” University of Galați
Ovidius University of Constantza
University of Bucharest

Slovakia

Academy of the Police Force in Bratislava

Slovenia

University of Ljubljana
University of Maribor

Spain

Coruña University
European University of Madrid
Granada University
La Laguna University
University of Girona
University of Vigo

Sweden

Linnaeus University
Malmö University
Stockholm University
University of Borås
University of Gothenburg
University West
Uppsala University

Switzerland

Bern University of Applied Sciences
University of Fribourg
University of Geneva
University of Lausanne
University of Teacher Education Lucerne

Türkiye

Kadir Has University
Karadeniz Technical University
Koç University

Ukraine

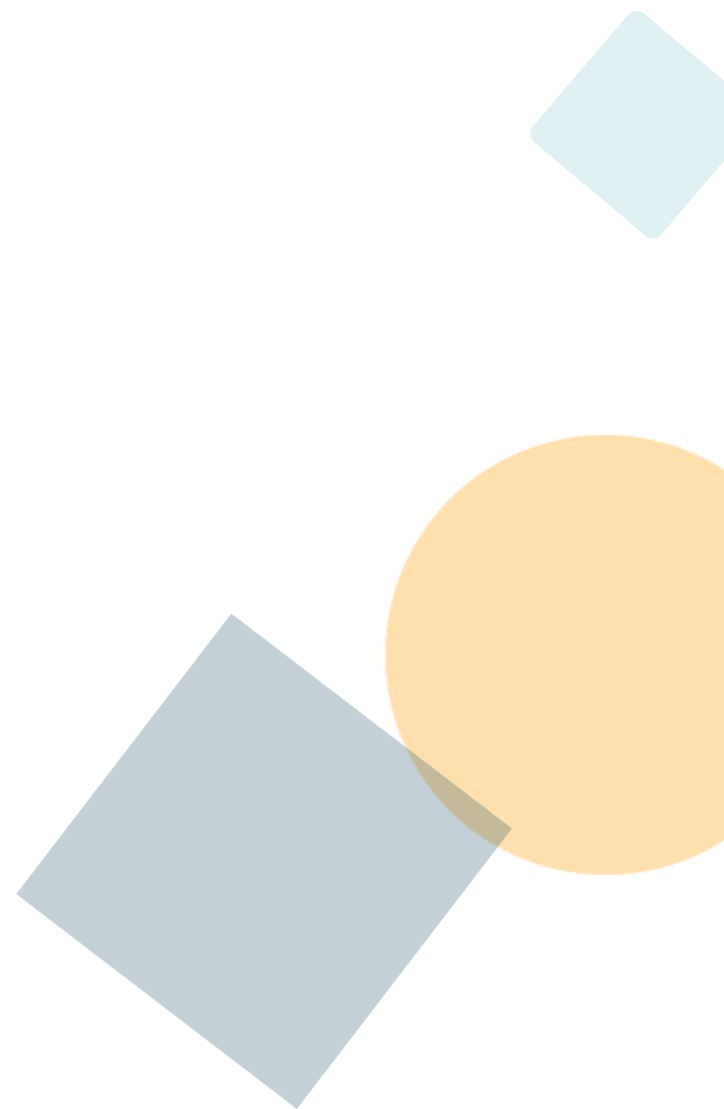
V.N. Karazin Kharkiv National University
Zhytomyr Polytechnic State University

United Kingdom

Queen Mary University of London
University of Bristol
University of Liverpool
University of Salford
University of St Andrews

Others

AAB College
University “Ukshin Hoti” Prizren



This publication has been developed under the Erasmus+ co-funded “Staff development for learning and teaching at European universities” (STAFF-DEV) project, led by the European University Association (EUA) and in partnership with University College Cork (Ireland), Utrecht University (Netherlands), the University of Oslo (Norway) and Ruhr University Bochum (Germany).

The project aims to analyse how staff development and academic assessment are conducted at European higher education institutions and to strengthen institutional capacity and strategies in this regard.

More information: <https://www.eua.eu/our-work/projects/eu-funded-projects/staffdev.html>