



A HANDBOOK FOR  
**TEACHING & LEARNING**  
IN HIGHER EDUCATION

ENHANCING ACADEMIC PRACTICE

FOURTH EDITION



*Edited by* HEATHER FRY STEVE KETTERIDGE STEPHANIE MARSHALL

# A Handbook for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education

This entirely new edition of a very successful book focuses on developing professional academic skills for supporting and supervising student learning and effective teaching. It is built on the premise that the roles of those who teach in higher education are complex and multi-faceted. *A Handbook for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education* is sensitive to the competing demands of teaching, research, scholarship and academic management.

The new edition reflects and responds to the rapidly changing context of higher education and to current understanding of how to best support student learning. Drawing together a large number of expert authors, it continues to feature extensive use of case studies that show how successful teachers have implemented these ideas. It includes key topics such as student engagement and motivation, internationalisation, employability, inclusive strategies for teaching, effective use of technology and issues relating to postgraduate students and student retention.

- Part 1 explores a number of aspects of the context of UK higher education that affect the education of students, looking at the drivers of institutional behaviours and how to achieve success as a university teacher.
- Part 2 examines learning, teaching and supervising in higher education and includes chapters on working with diversity, encouraging independent learning and learning gain.
- Part 3 considers approaches to teaching and learning in different disciplines, covering a full range including arts and humanities, social sciences and experimental sciences through to medicine and dentistry.

Written to support the excellence in teaching and learning design required to bring about student learning of the highest quality, this will be essential reading for all new lecturers, particularly anyone taking an accredited course in teaching and learning in higher education, as well as those experienced lecturers who wish to improve their teaching practice. Those working in adult learning and educational development will

also find the book to be a particularly useful resource. In addition it will appeal to staff who support learning and teaching in various other roles.

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# **A Handbook for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education**

Enhancing academic practice

Fourth edition

**Edited by**  
**Heather Fry**  
**Steve Ketteridge**  
**Stephanie Marshall**

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# Foreword

For any book to go into a second edition is a considerable achievement but to be invited to bring out a fourth edition suggests that the previous volumes have been a great success, that people have found the volume very helpful, that the topics ‘teaching and learning’ are high on the agenda of the higher education community and that the publisher has sold lots of copies. But there is more. The editors have done it again by bringing together a new collection of essays that will be invaluable to the new lecturer, as well as to those who have worked in the sector for many years, because their guides are leaders in the world of teaching and learning in higher education: Director of Education, Participation and Students at the Higher Education Funding Council for England (Heather Fry); Chief Executive of the Higher Education Academy (Stephanie Marshall); and the former Director of the Learning Institute in a research intensive university (Steve Ketteridge).

For anyone new to teaching, this will be the definitive guide. It is quite rightly described as a handbook that conveys the idea that it is a book for dipping into rather than reading from cover to cover. In this respect, it is an excellent sourcebook that pulls together material addressing many of the questions that higher education colleagues frequently raise at the start of their careers: how do you work with diverse groups? How do you engage students in the learning process? How do you supervise postgraduate research students? Here, the beginner will have the opportunity to explore ways that teaching, learning and assessment fit together because the essays include practical exercises and point towards areas of further support.

All together, these essays give the teacher the opportunity to reflect on some of the key questions and basic issues before turning to a series of discipline-based examples from the experimental sciences, the social sciences, arts, humanities and law, as well as the creative arts and vocational subjects such as Medicine and Dentistry. These essays contain case study material alongside questions about practice that will stimulate the beginning teacher while acting as a timely reminder, for those with greater experience, about ways to develop and enhance their practice.



Overall, Heather Fry, Steve Ketteridge and Stephanie Marshall have done it again. They have produced a splendid volume that highlights the importance of teaching and learning in higher education.

Sir Robert Burgess  
Chair of the Higher Education Academy  
Vice-Chancellor  
University of Leicester  
United Kingdom  
January 2014

**Part 1**  
**The current world of  
teaching and learning  
in higher education**

# 1

## A user's guide

Heather Fry, Steve Ketteridge  
and Stephanie Marshall

### SETTING THE CONTEXT OF ACADEMIC PRACTICE

This book starts from the premise that the roles of those who teach in higher education (HE) are complex and multifaceted. Teaching is just one of the roles that readers of this book will be undertaking. It recognises and acknowledges that academics have contractual obligations to pursue excellence in several directions, including teaching, research, scholarship and knowledge exchange, supervision, academic management and leadership. Many must also maintain their professional status within a vocational career, such as teaching or nursing. Academic practice is a term to encompass all these facets.

The focus of this book is on teaching, supporting student learning, assessment and the supervision of students. It is intended as a guide for anyone who teaches in HE and demonstrates how to best facilitate learning and contribute to the student learning experience. We stress the role of the academic as teacher (rather than any of their other roles) in both the title and text of this handbook, but effective teaching (and supervision, assessment and so on) has to be based on a clear understanding of how students learn for teaching to be successful.

The editors and authors all recognise the changing environment in HE in the United Kingdom. The greatest change since the last edition of the handbook has been in how teaching is funded, and the consequent increase in fees paid by many students. There is now more diversity across the four nations of the United Kingdom in how HE is funded, but the nations retain shared aims of purpose and outcome. Universities and colleges are now more fully involved in partnerships to deliver HE on overseas campuses and to recruit staff and students globally. Students are now viewed far more as 'partners' in their education to be engaged in all aspects of teaching and learning. Teaching to a diverse student body has been more widely embraced across the sector and strategies for inclusive teaching adopted. Initiatives to improve the flexibility of delivery and access to students have increased markedly. Online learning is now a normal component of many UK degree programmes. Academic staff may be routinely

teaching students face-to-face as well as distance learners. Some will also be travelling to teach on their university campuses overseas. The teaching strategies of universities have also changed since the last edition of the handbook. There is now more emphasis on preparing students for employment with far greater engagement with employers or the local economy in more rural institutions. We have aimed to incorporate and reflect all of these types of changing agendas within the various chapters in this latest edition of the handbook.

## PURPOSE OF THIS HANDBOOK

As with our previous editions, this book is intended primarily for relatively inexperienced teachers in HE in all types of institutions. Established lecturers interested in exploring recent developments in teaching, learning and assessment will also find it a valuable resource for updating their own practice. It is also intended that it will be of interest to the wide range of other professional staff working in HE, including those working in communication and information technology, library and technical staff, graduate **teaching assistants** and research staff. It has much to offer staff working outside HE who may have a role in teaching university students in the work place, such as clinicians, engineers and research scientists. Those joining universities after working abroad or perhaps returning from a career in industry or the professions will find the Handbook a helpful introduction to current practice in university teaching.

We know that previous editions of the handbook have been extensively used overseas in universities that have evolved from the British tradition. This edition has been written with these readers in mind to ensure it is fully accessible to audiences further afield. Previous editions of the handbook have also been translated into other languages for our non-English speaking readers.

The book is not based solely on the UK system and is informed by best practice from other countries and different types of institutions and providers of teaching, learning and assessment. It is underpinned and informed by appropriate references to research. The chapters are written by authors from a wide range of disciplinary traditions and reflect those styles in approach. The focus is primarily on teaching at the undergraduate level in England, that is levels 4, 5 and 6, but much will also apply to Masters (level 7) teaching, and there is a chapter solely dedicated to research supervision (level 8). A particular feature of this book is that it reviews the more generic issues in teaching and learning (such as effective lecturing or giving feedback to students) that will be common to most practitioners (in Part 2), and explores practices in a range of major disciplines or disciplinary clusters (in Part 3). Over the years, the editors have changed the particular disciplinary areas to some extent to showcase practices in newer and emerging disciplinary areas. Chapter 14, written by Professor Graham Gibbs, is slightly different to the others in Part 2. He takes a broad overview of how to maximise student learning gain and considers some of the key methods of enhancing student learning. Readers will find his chapter useful in extending their knowledge and understanding

of the complexities of the HE system in the United Kingdom, as well as contrasting it with features in other systems, most notably that of the United States.

This fourth edition of the handbook has been completely rewritten for a new audience. The chapters with titles similar to those in previous editions have all been written afresh to incorporate the latest ideas and research findings. The handbook reflects current systems and processes operating in the UK HE sector and includes new case studies based on latest practice. The editors have written new chapters in Part 1 that provide an introduction to the context of teaching practice and developing a career that involves HE teaching. They draw extensively on their most recent knowledge and experience at national and institutional level.

It is now usual for new staff to complete an accredited teaching programme of some type when taking up a post for the first time in HE where teaching will be a significant part of the role. This handbook has been particularly designed with those in mind and should be a useful and thought-provoking resource. It specifically supports those in the United Kingdom where the teaching programme is linked to gaining professional recognition through an Associate Fellowship or Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy (HEA).

The editors have drawn together authors from across a range of different institutions in the UK HE sector. The authors work in different types of roles in their institutions and collectively they offer a wealth of knowledge and experiences based on their expert practice. They have taken care in writing to avoid overusing jargon, but to introduce key terminology and to make all generic text accessible to all disciplines. The editors have sought to ensure that the Handbook provides a scholarly and rigorous approach, while maintaining a user-friendly format.

For the purposes of this handbook, the terms 'academic', 'lecturer', 'teacher' and 'tutor' are used interchangeably and should be taken to include anyone engaged in the support of student learning in HE.

## NAVIGATING THE HANDBOOK

An important feature of the handbook is that each chapter is written so that it can be read independently of the others and in any order. Readers can select and prioritise, according to their interest, although Chapter 5 (Student learning) should be essential reading at an early stage.

### *Part 1: The current world of teaching and learning in higher education*

Following this user's guide, this section has three principal chapters aimed at those new to university teaching in the United Kingdom. Chapter 2 sets out the UK context within which HE teaching occurs. It will help to demystify some of the national bodies and acronyms in everyday use in institutions. Importantly, it draws attention to different ways

in which students now engage with their institutions. Chapter 3 reviews the international dimensions of UK HE from the perspectives of staffing, students and overseas operations. Lastly, Chapter 4 considers success as a university teacher and considers career routes, personal development, rewards for excellence and recognition as an excellent teacher.

### ***Part 2: Learning, teaching and supervising in higher education***

Chapter 5 provides essential information about student learning. It is based upon theories of student learning in HE and how to use them in practice. It is followed by nine chapters that set out the major facets of teaching and/or learning from a more general perspective, rather than a particular disciplinary bias. They represent the essential toolkit for teaching, supervising, working with groups, course design, assessment and feedback for the less experienced teacher.

### ***Part 3: Teaching and learning in the disciplines***

This section includes 13 chapters that consider and explore teaching and learning in the major disciplinary groupings and current aspects of successful practice. They are written by academic staff who have taken a particular interest in the pedagogy of their own disciplines and include detailed case studies to showcase aspects of innovative practice from across the sector and from outside the United Kingdom. These chapters generally assume some background knowledge and understanding, such as from reading the chapters in Part 2.

## **DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF THE HANDBOOK**

### ***Case studies***

The case studies contained in each chapter are a particular strength of the handbook. In most cases, these include the names of the contributing case study authors. These exemplify issues, practices and research findings mentioned in the body of the respective chapters. The case studies are drawn from a wealth of different institutions, involving the everyday practice of their authors and their colleagues to demonstrate how particular approaches can be used successfully.

### ***Interrogating practice boxes***

Each chapter features one or more instances where readers are invited to review aspects of their own institution, school, course, students or practice. This is done by posing

short questions or prompts to the readers under the heading 'Interrogating practice'. This feature has a number of purposes: first, to encourage the reader to audit their own practice with a view to enhancement; second, to challenge the reader to examine critically their conceptions of teaching and workplace practice; and third, to get the reader to engage actively with a new idea and perhaps reflect on practice. In addition, they aim to ensure that readers are familiar with their institutional and/or school policies and practices. Readers are free to choose whether or not they engage with these personal interrogations.

### *Glossary*

There is a glossary after Part 3 listing technical terms and educational acronyms in common usage that have been used in chapters. In each chapter, the authors have put such terms in **bold** to indicate that a brief definition of the meaning of words or terms may be found alphabetically listed in the glossary. Authors have been careful to use such technical words or terms sparingly so as not to overload the reader coming from a different background, but many are terms that will be encountered and need to be used in teaching in HE. The glossary may be used in conjunction with reading the chapter or (as many of our previous readers have found) used as a separate resource. The glossary entries include new terms in the fourth edition plus others from previous editions, which have been refreshed and renewed.

### **FURTHER READING AND/OR REFERENCES**

Each chapter has a final section that includes suggestions for further reading. In some cases, this will be a few carefully selected review articles and books. In other cases, the reader will be referred to key journal publications and primary sources. There are also many links to online resources.