

## UTeachers' Academy

### Previously: Excellent Teacher Practitioner (ETP)

With thanks to everyone involved in the ETP 1.0 pilot and the input received. All input has been incorporated into this follow-up plan. The objective of the UTeachers' Academy is the improvement of the quality of education (continually) and, in doing so, increase student satisfaction and increase value of and reward employees dedicated to the professionalization of their teaching practices.

### Current situation

In 2016-2017, the pilot with working title 'Excellent Teacher Practitioner' (ETP) was executed. The motivation for this pilot was the EEMCS faculty's interest to promote the field of academic teaching practices. EEMCS believes that while current teaching practices are good, there is potential for further improvement. The ETP focused on all teachers within EEMCS with the ambition to develop and implement excellent teaching practices and develop themselves, regardless of UFO profile. In addition to a UFO profile-based HR policy proposal used to assess the potential for advancement based on teaching practices, EEMCS would like to develop a *network of excellent teachers* within which the UFO profile does not play a role. Additionally, the ETP working title will now be replaced by a more suitable and engaging name, UTeachers' Academy.

Information sources for the shaping of the ETP 1.0 pilot were the manner in which Lund University shaped professor development and research conducted by Ruth Graham as commissioned by the Royal Academy of Engineering. While this pilot was not based on the initiative in Lund and Ruth Graham's research, they were used as inspiration. One of the inspiring aspects is that teachers work *evidence-informed* on the further development of their teaching practices and discuss the results with their colleagues. The 1.0 pilot, for which approximately 20 teachers provided input during teachers' meetings, aimed to gain and share more clarity concerning suitable content for the UTeachers' Academy and to begin the network. No network has yet been established as the UTeachers' Academy will be adapted based on the results of the pilot and the input from the advisory group. The guiding principles for a follow-up pilot are listed below.

## UTeachers' Academy

This proposal serves to formulate several principles so that the UTeachers' Academy can be further shaped by launching a subsequent pilot. The proposed principles for the pilot UTeachers' Academy are as follows.

1. A **network** will be formed of EEMCS teachers with a passion for education and the ambition to improve their teaching practices based on new insights gleaned from literature, experience elsewhere and discourse with colleagues. Teachers in the network receive the opportunity to conduct pilots, develop best practices, learn from the new experiments/methods and communicate and discuss results with other teachers. The network will begin with a small group including teachers from various educational programmes. After a period of one year, this small group of teachers may invite new teachers to join the network.
2. The network applies an **'inclusive approach'**. This means that teachers expressly interested in developing themselves as an educator are welcome to express interest in joining.
3. The **scholarly approach** assumes that teachers expand their didactic expertise with a research-based approach to their teaching practices. The objective is for theories and research results in the field of education and learning are used to underpin a teacher's own choices and the reflection of such. As this is not one of the teacher's core duties, assistance from the educational consultants may be requested (such as CELT personnel).

4. The **sharing of results** (publishing via education seminar, newsletter, informing colleagues within the field) within the faculty is important. Additionally, the teacher may aspire to share results with other faculties or potentially beyond the university. Publishing outside of the faculty is not a must but a teacher may find themselves up to the challenge. Assistance from an educational consultant may, or course, also be received. The objective is for the network to become the figurehead of the faculty, and potentially of the university.
5. In principle, a teacher is **an active network member for 3 years** after which time the teacher remains a member of the network but may choose to play a less active role. Teachers' temporary active periods in the network and the resulting dynamic composition provides increased potential for variation in activities initiated and taken up by the network. Active membership means that activities are organized by these active network members though long-term members can also provide an important/significant contribution.
6. The network will elect its own president and secretary annually. The president and the secretary are the points of contact for individuals within and outside of the network.
7. The role of the president and the secretary is to **prepare an annual programme** together with the members including the activities to be conducted and the implementation of the annual programme. The annual plan will also include clear attention to the organization and execution of network meetings. The annual programme will be further elaborated on in point 8.
8. The **objective of the annual programme** is to contribute to the professionalization of teachers within the network as well as beyond and the sharing and discussion of experiences both in and outside the network. The annual plan consists of two components.  
The **first and general component is primarily focused on manifesting the network's objective by inspiring and motivating fellow teachers**. There are many different methods applicable, such as: discussing new teaching methods and/or related literature, organizing education seminars, establishing and participating in a faculty education blog/blog collective, organizing meetups for teachers, encouraging teachers to participate in education-oriented conferences, courses or MOOCS, writing articles concerning teaching innovations, visiting other universities with interesting initiatives, presenting results on the UT education day for example, etc.  
**The second component consists of pilots:** the planning of educational reforms in a course or module conducted by one or more (teams of) teachers in the network. Teachers can submit project proposals individual or as a team prior to a specific date (to be determined). To provide a level of flexibility, a project proposal may also be submitted after the respective date. The idea is to request funding for as many pilot proposals as possible with the Comenius programme, SURF and BIG Grant (utwente), for example. Good project proposals which are not granted external funding may be granted internally.
9. An extensive budget is not available for the implementation of the annual programme. Time and funds invested in the network and activities will be funded as much as possible by granted subsidies (Comenius, SURF, etc.) or will be reimbursed via the chair. A budget must be included when submitting projects (see 8). Reimbursement may also be provided via the faculty if no budget can be obtained. This includes, for example, conference visitation or the appointment of student assistants for the realization of the pilot.
10. The network is much more than a think-tank. The network's implementation of the activities is also conducted by network members. A teacher may, with a highly motivated educational objective, work on the SUTQ and/or preparation of a career step from UD to UHD2 for example or a career step as referred to in the HR policy proposal.<sup>1</sup>

11. The annual plan will be submitted to an **assessment board** for approval. Both the Portfolio Holder for Education and at least one member of the EEMCS Education advisory board participate in the assessment board. Scope and exact composition to be determined. The assessment board will ultimately determine whether the annual plan is approved, and which project proposals will be granted. With approval of the annual plan and project proposals, the faculty management signifies that the network is supported by the advisory board and that the members will receive the time and, where necessary, the funds and support required to execute the plan.
12. The **members of the network** can **assist** with activities such as mentoring of new colleagues, taking part in the programme committee, board of examiners, evaluation board or visits preparation group, consulting module teams or individual teachers upon request or observing lessons upon request, attending education conferences and disseminating ideas and experiences, securing subsidies/funding by submitting project proposals to Comenius and SURF for example, writing open education materials, etc.
13. The network is **supported by the quality assurance coordinator and the faculty educationalist**. They can collaborate with the network, advise and carry out preliminary work where necessary. Additionally, they will evaluate pilot 2 and, in doing so, the operation of the network and the effects resulting from the network with the objective of further forming and/or solidifying the network. Together with the network members, they may also facilitate dissemination of the results to other faculties.

---

<sup>i</sup> <https://www.utoday.nl/news/64975/weg-vrij-voor-hoogleraar-op-basis-van-onderwijs>