

Project Success Story

Institution

Kingdom University, Bahrain

Project

Achieving Excellence

The journey of implementing the Professional Standards Framework (PSF) at Kingdom University (KU) in Bahrain.

Background/Context

Established in 2001, Kingdom University is a well-renowned private institution in Bahrain which is dedicated to offering exceptional educational services to its students. The University offers students state-of-the-art facilities and a conducive learning environment for their personal and academic development.

KU strongly believes in placing students at the centre of its teaching and learning. The University wanted to ensure that it developed staff to deliver on this promise by:

- + enhancing and continuously developing its pedagogical practices and approaches
- + embedding a culture of personal responsibility for professional advancement and progress
- + rewarding and recognising staff for their commitment to teaching and continuous professional development
- + investing in a staff development plan and thereby demonstrating the University's commitment to teaching excellence to all its stakeholders.

To achieve this, KU decided to work with Advance HE and embark on a journey to adopt the [Professional Standards Framework](#) and promote the benefits of Advance HE [Fellowship](#) for all its teaching staff.

Solution

Advance HE's Fellowship team – and in its previous guise as the Higher Education Academy – has worked with Kingdom University since 2017. Work has included a number of development programmes to support staff in their understanding and enacting of the dimensions of the PSF. This work has consequently supported those staff with Fellowship applications, promoting a reflective approach to teaching, self-challenge and continuous professional development. Over time, early adopters of fellowship at KU have been well-placed to support other colleagues to make their own fellowship applications.

Professor Saad Darwish, Director of Entrepreneurship Center and Acting Head of Community, College of Business Administration, Kingdom University, and who himself is a Principal Fellow, has led a comprehensive programme exploring the PSF and guiding fellowship applications. He explains the University's approach:

“Advanced HE fellowships serve as a valuable benchmark for faculty excellence, providing a structured framework for self-reflection, peer review and continuous improvement.

“Our philosophy is underpinned by a strong sense of personal responsibility for professional advancement and progress, and the PSF is embedded at an individual level and acts as an institutional strategic driver towards teaching excellence. The PSF helps to remove any contention and ambiguity about what effective pedagogical practice should look like, and the new framework (PSF 23) provides us with a refreshed set of standards underpinned by the latest thinking and a clear, more overt emphasis on students, collaboration and inclusivity.

“By implementing these strategies, KU can effectively train faculty members to apply for Advance HE fellowships. The accumulated experiences, combined with a supportive and collaborative environment, empowers faculty members to achieve their professional development goals and contribute to the overall success of KU.

“Teaching excellence is the cornerstone of success and is the driving force that compels me and my colleagues to achieve and build an institutional reputation that resonates far and wide.

“To support this, as a mark of international best practice and quality standards, we have made it mandatory that all our staff delivering or supporting teaching and learning gain one of the four categories of fellowship.

“KU is transforming and changing to enhance standards and promote a culture of excellence. Embedding the refreshed PSF standards lies at the core of this undertaking because the PSF acts as a compass, guiding us towards articulating the essential values, attitudes and skills that define our most significant objectives for our faculty, students and broader stakeholders. The PSF is an anchor that supports how we learn, grow and adapt to the ever-changing world of higher education.

“The PSF and a commitment to continuous improvement have become part of our everyday culture. For example, regular ‘coffee’ mornings with colleagues to share ideas around best practices based on the PSF have become a valuable and routine way to enhance and improve teaching practices. These informal gatherings allow fellows to discuss their experiences, share their knowledge and learn from each other.”

Outcomes

According to Professor Saad Darwish, the PSF, “has enabled faculty to perform their teaching responsibilities confidently and earnestly, fostering innovation and quality in their work.

“In addition, it has significantly impacted on our students' lives, allowing them to reach their full potential. The pulse on enhancing teaching and learning is high, and our colleagues are progressing nicely and having a good deal of joy and fulfilment.”

Kingdom University achievements in the journey for Fellowships:

Category	Awarded	In process Submission
Principal Fellowship	1	1
Senior Fellows	4	1
Fellows	33	2
Candidates Under Training	14	-

Kristian Rumble, Advance HE’s Head of Membership (Global), said, “Kingdom University has been an institutional member of Advance HE for over six years and during this time has engaged with a range of member benefits to support teaching excellence. The partnership enables staff to access Advance HE's resources, networks and events, helping to foster a culture of teaching excellence and innovation within the institution and beyond.

“Professor Saad (PFHEA) was instrumental in developing a culture of teaching excellence at Kingdom University. During the time I have known him and his colleagues in the University’s leadership team, they have implemented a clear pathway of CPD, linked to fellowship, which engenders a culture of continuous improvement. Not only that, but the institution has adopted the PSF as a benchmark of excellence, supporting staff to gain fellowship which ultimately contributes to an excellent student experience. They have done a fantastic job and the results bear this out.”

About Kingdom University

Kingdom University is one of the first private higher education institutions in Bahrain. It was established in 2001 and offers undergraduate and postgraduate programmes across various fields of study. The University aims to provide quality education that meets the needs of the labour market and the society. The University also strives to foster a culture of research, innovation and entrepreneurship among its students and faculty.

Kingdom University is accredited by the Higher Education Council of Bahrain and has partnerships with several international universities and organisations.

KU prioritises fostering diversity among its student body and dedicated staff members. This commitment allows it to foster a warm and inclusive academic environment affiliated to a

closely-knit family. The University's dedication to delivering a comprehensive global education experience is evident through its extensive international links and local accreditations and its collaborations with institutions of high repute across the globe.

The University takes great pride in providing a distinctive student life that encompasses diverse extracurricular activities to enhance the overall educational journey. Its faculty members, who possess high qualifications, are committed to supporting and guiding students throughout their academic endeavours. The primary objective is to equip them with the necessary skills to excel in their chosen profession and path in life.

www.ku.edu.bh