

The developmental needs of higher education academic leaders in encouraging effective teaching and learning

Shelda Debowski and Vivienne Blake,
Organisational and Staff Development Services,
University of Western Australia

While teaching and learning is an increasingly valued component of university work, there has been limited recognition of the role university leaders play in encouraging good teaching and learning. This paper reviews the teaching leadership responsibilities of various academics in universities, identifying the range of leadership roles which might be assumed. It argues that effective academic leaders draw on educational principles and leadership skills to encourage good teaching. The complexity of these responsibilities is clearly evident when the different educational roles are considered more closely. A course coordinator, for example, requires a different leadership focus to a head of school. A detailed examination of these roles is undertaken, leading to a review of how developmental support for these teaching leaders might be undertaken. We argue that academic roles need to be more clearly defined, and supported more specifically, so that the different leadership roles can be better developed. The need to more strongly support academics who lead teaching is identified as a critical priority for Australian universities

Contact Details:

Professor Shelda Debowski
Director,
Organisational and Staff Development Services,
University of Western Australia
Stirling Highway, Crawley, WA 6009
Phone: 08 93803845
Fax: 08 93801156
Email: Shelda.Debowski@uwa.edu.au