

Project Success Story

Institution

Walailak University, Thailand

Project title

Certificate in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (CLTHE) and Fellowship

Background/Context

Advance HE began working with Walailak University (WU) in 2018, as the institution had the intention of developing teaching and recognising their faculty against globally recognised standards. WU wanted to develop a 'culture of teaching', where staff could work together to share best practice and continuously develop their teaching practice.

When the Covid-19 pandemic struck in early 2020, there was also a need to help teaching staff to develop high-quality remote and blended learning approaches, which could deliver a similar quality student experience while maintaining academic rigour.

Solution

Following conversations with WU, Advance HE proposed delivering a version of their top teaching and learning development programme, the Certificate in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (CLTHE). The programme is aligned to the Professional Standards Framework for Teaching and Supporting Learning in HE (PSF) and staff are encouraged to apply for Fellowship upon completion of the programme.

Advance HE Fellowship is an internationally recognised marker of teaching quality and it was announced recently that there have now been 150,000 Fellowships awarded around the world across all four categories: Associate Fellow, Fellow, Senior Fellow and Principal Fellow. The categories are designed to reflect the wide range of teaching experiences and support which takes place in higher education around the world.

Outcomes

Advance HE has now delivered four cohorts of the CLTHE to staff at Walailak University since beginning the programme in 2018, both in person and online, with participants encouraged to apply

for Fellowship on completion of the programme. The results and impact since the programme began have been startling.

Walailak University now has over 90% of its staff recognised as Advance HE Fellows across all categories, including 56 Senior Fellows and one Principal Fellow. The impact of Fellowship on the institution was highlighted in 2020, when it was revealed that the drop-out rate among first year students had decreased from close to 30% to less than 2% since they began taking part in the CLTHE. Recognising the impact of the programme, Walailak University's Vice President for Global Engagement and Faculty Development, Associate Professor Dr. Surin Maisrikrod said: "There is now a culture of teaching at Walailak University. Before this work, staff did not talk about teaching, whereas now you can hear them discussing their teaching in everyday conversations. Student learning is at the heart of all our work."

WU benefitted from strong senior leadership, which has strongly encouraged participants of the CLTHE to apply for Fellowship. Professor Dr. Sombat Thamrongthanyawong, President of WU, has championed the initiative, while their Chairman, Professor Dr Wichit Srisa-an (also Chairman of Suranaree University of Technology and Sukothai Thammathirat Open University), became the first Principal Fellow in Thailand in 2020.

They held a celebration event in late 2021 to mark this milestone – hosted by Professor Sombat, featuring speeches from Professor Wichit, Dr Surin and Dr Suthanya Doung In. It was attended by Fellows across Walailak University and a team from Advance HE, including Kathy Wright (Assistant Director of Knowledge, Innovation and Delivery), Andy Hudson (Advance HE Teaching and Learning Associate) and Ian Hall (Head of Membership, International). Professor Sombat said, "We have been working very hard in the past five years or so to make WU a world-class university, and high-quality teaching constitutes an essential pillar of our efforts."

Kathy Wright, who co-delivered the programme alongside Andy Hudson said: "The participants in the programme have embraced new pedagogic ideas and practices shared in the programme, and have been fantastic at evaluating their work and sharing their successes with colleagues. Each participant in the programme has taken part in an action research group project, and the posters produced in these projects have been outstanding in their quality. I am delighted that so many WU staff have now been awarded Fellowship, and look forward to more being successful in future."

Kathryn Harrison-Graves, Director of Membership and Accreditation at Advance HE said: "The work that Walailak University have done to support the development of teaching over the past three years has been nothing short of fantastic, and is reflective of their strategic commitment to the learning experience of their students. We are delighted to be working with them and are equally delighted at the huge impact that the CLTHE programme and the Fellowship scheme has had on their teaching faculty.

"Supporting the enhancement of teaching and learning is core to the work of Advance HE and the Fellowship scheme is a big part of that. We are very proud that we have recently awarded the 150,000th Fellowship and it is both inspiring and uplifting to see growing global engagement with this important recognition scheme."