

Project Success Story

Institution

The Turkish Higher Education Quality Council through the British Council in Turkey

Project title

Teaching & Learning Excellence Centres Training for Turkish Universities

Background/Context

This programme was commissioned by the British Council in Turkey to support the Turkish Higher Education Quality Council (THEQC/ YÖKAK), and the participating universities to enhance teaching and quality assurance. Delivered initially to a cohort of senior academics, a second cohort of over 150 participants took place, covering a range of modules including how to lead a centre of teaching excellence.

Solution

Following conversations with the British Council Turkey and the THEQC, Advance HE's proposal was to deliver a bespoke version of its top teaching and learning development programme, the Certificate in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (CLTHE) for two distinct cohorts: the first programme was for 40 'master trainers' and comprised six modules (1-3 on Teaching Excellence and 3-6 on Quality Assurance) equipping participants to lead similar programmes in their own universities; and a second programme, for 150 participants, to broaden and deepen the teaching and QA training in the sector and thereby building capacity in institutions.

In an illustration of the flexibility of the delivery team and the dynamic nature of the programme, adjustments were made following cohort one, which gave the second cohort's programme a greater practitioner or front-line focus, with more time devoted to topics such as 'engaging with students as partners' and on 'peer review and observation'

The Certificate in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education programme is aligned to the Professional Standards Framework for Teaching and Supporting Learning in HE (PSF) and participants can use the experience as evidence in any subsequent applications for Advance HE Fellowship.

A third element of the work was a five-day study visit to the UK. A delegation of senior managers of the THEQC, including the Vice President, visited Advance HE's London office along with City, University of London, University College London, University of East London and the Royal Society of Chemistry. The purpose of the visit was to build upon the learning from the delivery of the training programmes, to gain a richer and deeper insight into the role these Centres play in teaching quality and excellence and to see how Advance HE worked with these organisations to promote learning and teaching.



Visiting the Royal Society of Chemistry, London

As is standard in its approach, Advance HE evaluates each phase of delivery and provides an additional report six months after the conclusion of the work to assess impact and make recommendations for further action. Drawing on its own expert trainers as well as its global associate base, Advance HE was able to offer a programme, underpinned by current learning theory and drawing on best practice of “what works” in higher education. The programme facilitators modelled interactive and collaborative learning activities for participants that supported authentic and participative learning and assessment, as well as demonstrating creative approaches to engaging learners face-to-face or online.

Outcomes

Advance HE has now delivered to both cohorts. The programme is aligned to the Professional Standards Framework for Teaching and Supporting Learning in HE (PSF) and participants can use the experience as evidence in any subsequent applications for Fellowship. The PSF is internationally recognised and Fellowship is a way of demonstrating their commitment to continuous professional development in teaching and learning.

Feedback from participants of the first cohort showed:

- 93.8% of participants strongly agreed or agreed that they had the opportunity to engage with and discuss **quality assurance systems and processes**.
- 87.5% of participants strongly agreed or agreed that the programme sessions had **introduced them to new approaches to learning**.

In the second cohort:

- 94.1% of participants confirmed that the programme was **relevant to the context of higher education institutions in Turkey**
- 92.6% confirmed that they felt **more confident to employ quality assurance work** at my own higher education institution
- 97.1% said that they felt **more confident to take an active role for the teaching and learning excellence centres**.

Participant comments included:

- “Yararlı bulduğum ve yeni kazanımlarımdan olduğu bir program oldu, planlama sürecinden gerçekleştirmeye kadar katkısı olan tüm ekibe teşekkür ederim.” ***It was a programme that I found useful and I had new achievements. I would like to thank all the team who contributed from the planning process to the implementation***
- “İlham verici harika bir deneyimdi. Çok teşekkür ederim.” ***It was a wonderful inspiring experience. Thank you so much.***
- “Çok öğreticiydi ve düşündürücüydü.” ***It was very instructive and thought provoking.***

Prof. Dr. Mustafa Cufalı, Vice President, Turkish Higher Education Quality Council, said, “As the Turkish Higher Education Quality Council, we continue our cooperation and experience sharing in the international arena. During our academic visits in London, we had extensive and useful conversations with representatives of teaching and learning excellence centres of UK universities. We had the opportunity to observe the work of UK universities on-site and shared our experiences about the practices and innovations in higher education institutions of the two countries in terms of quality education.”

Ali Murat Guclu, Education Projects Manager, British Council, said, “As a result of this strategic partnership with the Turkish Higher Education Quality Council and the Advance HE, we successfully delivered the training programme and visited six different institutions in London with THEQC’s delegation. We exchanged valuable information on teaching and learning excellence centres. We are delighted to establish, deepen and support strategic partnerships between UK and Turkish higher education institutions.”

Daniel Sheratte, Advance HE International Partnerships Manager, said, “We were delighted to work in partnership with THEQC and the British Council in Turkey. The programme was a productive way to work with ‘early adopters’ of the PSF and build additional capacity to promote and embed a dynamic approach to teaching with continuous professional development and enhancement at its core.

“We look forward to opportunities to build on this work, supporting the THEQC in its strategic goals for the sector and institutions as they seek to take a holistic approach to enhancement working towards Advance HE accredited provision, and with individuals as they apply for Fellowship.”