Associate Professor Beth Beckmann
Beth Beckmann & Associates P/L

Beth Beckmann PFHEA SFSEDA CMALT is an independent higher education consultant. A biologist, writer and, above all, teacher, Beth has national and institutional awards for innovation in university teaching, academic development and gender equity.

Fellowship title: Professional Recognition and Self-Efficacy in University Teachers as Tools to Enhance Teaching Quality

Year completed: 2016

Expertise key words: professional recognition, academic development, university teaching

What did you achieve?: In 2013, I established internationally-accredited professional recognition of ANU educators through the UK-based, standards-referenced Higher Education Academy (HEA) fellowships. I led this pioneering strategy to spotlight a keystone of quality teaching—academics’ own beliefs (self-efficacy) that they teach effectively. My 2014–15 National Teaching Fellowship (NTF) spread this idea—of peers assessing educators on reflective, quantitative and qualitative evidence about their engagement in teaching and learning. I encouraged universities to acknowledge formally individuals’ experience, expertise and commitment to quality student learning beyond competitive teaching awards, extended equitably to academic, sessional and professional staff. Immediately I began my NTF activities, enthused university leaders asked me to support pilot institutional schemes. Modelling developmental mentoring, I made the HEA-accredited ANU program an Australian hub, supporting nine universities in successful pilots, and convened two acclaimed international symposia on professional recognition (2016, 2017). After the first, HEA established an Australasian Strategic Advisory Board. My NTF has influenced all Australian universities to review their approaches to educator recognition. By 2019 more than half Australia’s universities had established HEA (now Advance HE)–accredited programs or included HEA fellowships in professional learning strategies. Thousands of staff across Australia already sport their HEA postnominals proudly. My research shows HEA fellowship application/recognition increases self-efficacy, confidence and pride, with especially strong impacts on junior academics, professional staff and (at all career stages) women. Now an independent consultant, I am privileged to continue supporting Australia’s university educators to be recognised as professional, reflective and caring.

What does the sector need now?: An Australian–contextualised strategy for professional recognition of university educators encompassing HEA/HERDSA fellowships, AAUT/institutional/peak–body teaching awards, CMALT and others.