



Committee	UNIVERSITY EXECUTIVE BOARD
Date of meeting	23/02/2026
Confidential	NO

Subject/Title: CADI CPD Review

Author(s): Dr Matthew Fleet

Consultation/Committee Approval

This review employed semi-structured interviews with Deans, Associate Deans, and Associate Heads across faculties at the University of Portsmouth to critically explore institutional perspectives on CPD and CADI offered.

Financial Implications

None

Alignment to University Strategy

- Maximising educational gain and transformational growth
- Continuous improvement

'The work that CADI do is the heart of the university from which everything else revolves around. Because CADI, if you like, is the heart that pumps the blood around the university from a teaching and learning perspective.'

Executive Summary

This review evaluates academic engagement with Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and assesses the effectiveness, perception and scope of CADI's provision.

CADI offers a comprehensive CPD programme including workshops, digital resources, community events and the annual Learning and Teaching Conference. The provision is well regarded, and sector comparison suggests engagement is relatively strong against wider UK trends, where voluntary pedagogic CPD often attracts limited participation. CADI's coherent, institution-wide model represents a more integrated approach than is typical across the sector.

However, participation remains uneven. Semi-structured interviews with senior academic leaders, including Associate Deans Academic and experienced programme leads, identified key barriers influencing staff engagement. These included: time poverty, workload saturation and competing priorities. Some perceived CPD as overly generic or compliance-driven and expressed a desire for more discipline-specific, flexible and career-aligned provision. Attendance alone does not ensure meaningful professional learning and staff emphasised the need for protected time, contextual relevance and clearer incentives. One leader emphasised: *'it's just one more thing, I know it is so important, but it is so difficult to get staff to do this, when so much is put on them already'*. Despite these challenges, staff expressed strong appreciation for CADI's expertise, responsiveness and central role in advancing teaching quality. The team is viewed as collaborative, adaptive and pivotal to educational enhancement.

The review recommends embedding protected time for CPD, increasing flexibility in format, strengthening disciplinary tailoring and clarifying the distinction between mandatory and optional CPD activity. In practice, there has been significant progress in this area, and CADI are working pro-actively in partnership with programme teams to help respond to discipline specific need whilst curating a wider portfolio of CPD activity. However, there remains considerable opportunity to strengthen this approach and to develop mechanisms for Faculties to more effectively articulate their development goals with CADI acting as partner, broker and enabler of high-quality, discipline-appropriate CPD.

Research Context and Sector Comparison

The professional learning of staff in Higher Education is central to institutional effectiveness, pedagogic innovation and student success, with Continuing Professional Development positioned as the primary mechanism through which academics enhance teaching, adapt to technological and structural change and demonstrate excellence within an increasingly accountable sector (Boud and Brew, 2013). At Portsmouth, CADI delivers a comprehensive CPD offer designed to foster innovation in teaching, learning and assessment, yet engagement in voluntary provision remains limited, raising questions about how staff perceive its value. The literature suggests that professional learning in academia is shaped by autonomy, workload, performativity and identity (Shah and Nair, 2016; Trowler, 2008), and where CPD is experienced as compliance-driven, generic or disconnected from disciplinary practice, participation is minimal (Stefani, 2003). Engagement increases when development is contextualised, co-designed and co-owned by academic teams rather than centrally imposed (Omland et al., 2025), indicating that the challenge is not simply one of provision but of culture, structure and academic ownership. Comparing CPD engagement at Portsmouth with sector-wide trends is important but constrained by limited comparable data. Academic disengagement from CPD is widely documented across UK Higher Education (Trowler, 2008; Stefani, 2003), and national evidence indicates that voluntary pedagogic development often attracts low participation. Advance HE surveys conducted between 2020 and 2022 report modest engagement in non-mandatory teaching development, while research from JISC (2022) and the Higher

Education Academy suggests uptake increases primarily when CPD is embedded within appraisal, promotion or workload allocation. Advance HE (2020) further argues that sustained engagement is strongest when professional development is integrated into strategic priorities and reward structures, indicating that voluntary CPD remains vulnerable when time is not protected and expectations are unclear. Within this context, emerging internal data suggests that engagement with CADI is comparatively strong. Interview evidence indicates that staff value the coherence of the program, its practical relevance and its alignment with teaching priorities, identifying perceived impact and accessible support as key motivators. This contrasts with literature describing fragmented or compliance-driven CPD models in other institutions (Hitch, Mahoney and Macfarlane, 2018; Matthews and Dobbins, 2021), suggesting that CADI's unified, enhancement-focused approach reflects a more embedded culture of academic development than is evident in many comparator settings.

Recommendation(s) for Action

Please see table - Findings and Recommendations

Health and Safety Implications

None in relation to the decisions required

Equality and Diversity Implications

None in relation to the decisions required

Communications

CADI staff, Faculty leaders, senior managers

Findings and Recommendations

Theme number and priority	Theme Title	Where are we now?	Recommendations	CADI Action	Time frame
1	Faculty-Level Alignment and Local Ownership	<p>Engagement increases where CPD is co-owned and ideally discipline focussed.</p> <p>Faculty-level data demonstrates variation in uptake, suggesting opportunity for targeted planning rather than uniform provision.</p>	<p>Accountability - faculty leaders to monitor CPD engagement using CADI data and embed participation within performance management and faculty priorities.</p>	<p>CADI will provide CPD engagement data, with faculty leaders responsible for monitoring participation and embedding it within performance processes.</p>	<p>Medium (Start September 2026)</p>
		<p>Shifting CPD monitoring from anecdotal perception to evidence-based oversight will make faculty-level engagement patterns and gaps visible, transferring responsibility from CADI alone to shared leadership accountability and enabling more targeted, locally owned action.</p>	<p>Strengthen visibility of CPD engagement at faculty level by producing summaries of participation, enabling more targeted and strategic support.</p>	<p>CADI will develop faculty-level overview of CPD engagement, using existing data sources to identify participation trends and potential gaps. To be shared with faculty leaders.</p>	<p>Medium (Start September 2026)</p>

Theme number and priority	Theme Title	Where are we now?	Recommendations	CADI Action	Time frame
2	Time Poverty & Academic Saturation <i>CPD is deprioritised due to workload pressures</i>	Time emerged as the most dominant barrier to engagement. Staff are not resistant to CPD, they are saturated by operational and administrative demands.	Ensure that protected CPD time, already embedded within workload planning is actively enforced and formally accounted.	CADI will work with senior leadership to ensure protected CPD time is formally embedded, enforced and monitored within workload models.	Medium to long (Start 2026 /2027)
		Without structural recognition of CPD time within workload models, engagement will remain uneven.	Integrate CPD into team-based away days to streamline engagement within existing departmental time.	CADI will expand CPD integration into team-based away days, building on the initial school pilot.	Short to medium (Start Spring/ Summer 2026)
3	Centralisation vs Contextual Relevance <i>Disconnect between CADI's provision and academic needs</i>	Centralisation has improved coherence and strategic alignment but created perceived distance from course- and module-level realities. The issue is not absence of support, but relational and contextual fit. CADI has attempted various approaches to develop this.	Co-creation: promote CPD as collaborative by involving academic teams in planning and feedback.	CADI will involve Course Leaders and Associate Deans in termly CPD planning to co-design provision and review.	Medium (Start September 2026)
		Stronger co-planning structures and clearer communication of relevance will rebalance institutional strategy with local academic identity.	Clarify the purpose and benefits of CPD in all communications, linking sessions to teaching priorities.	CADI will ensure all CPD communications clearly articulate purpose, benefits, and alignment with teaching priorities.	Short to medium (Start Spring/ Summer 2026)

Theme number and priority	Theme Title	Where are we now?	Recommendations	CADI Action	Time frame
4	Cultural Perception and Legitimacy <i>Some see CPD as generic, irrelevant, or performative</i>	Perceptions of “tick-box” CPD reflect cultural mistrust and blurred distinctions between compliance and developmental provision.	Strengthen the perceived value of CPD by co-designing sessions around real programme-level challenges and discipline-specific priorities rather than generic frameworks (needs driven and through discussion with CLs, AD, etc).	CADI will strengthen the perceived value of CPD by co-designing more discipline-specific sessions.	Medium (Start September 2026)
		Where CPD feels imposed or generic, engagement declines. CADI already provides high-quality developmental content, but clearer differentiation from compliance training is required.	Introduce tiered CPD pathways (early, mid, senior career) to improve relevance and support progression.	CADI to consider introducing tiered CPD pathways	Medium to long term (Start 2026 /2027)
			Embed student partnership in CPD design to strengthen authenticity and impact.	CADI will embed student partnership within CPD design.	Short (Start Spring/ Summer 2026)

Theme number and priority	Theme Title	Where are we now?	Recommendations	CADI Action	Time frame
5	Loss of Relationships & Responsive Support <i>Faculty-based expertise has been replaced with bureaucracy</i>	Staff value relational access and informal problem-solving. While CADI remains responsive and offers bespoke support, the shift to a centralised model has reduced informal visibility.	Embed termly CADI–Faculty planning meetings with course teams to move from reactive requests to sustained partnership.	CADI will embed termly Faculty planning meetings with course teams, starting after Semester 2, to move from reactive requests to sustained partnership.	Short to Medium (Start Spring/ Summer 2026)
		CADI has attempted various approaches to position staff within departments. Rebuilding relational infrastructure will strengthen trust, accessibility and perception of responsiveness. This is less about reversing centralisation and more about humanising it.	Co-design sessions with subject specialists, ensuring CPD feels authentic, discipline-specific and relevant.	CADI will strengthen the perceived value of CPD by co-designing more discipline-specific sessions.	Medium (Start September 2026)

Theme number and priority	Theme Title	Where are we now?	Recommendations	CADI Action	Time frame
6	<p>Career Incentives Do Not Favour CPD</p> <p><i>CPD has little visibility in promotion pathways</i></p>	<p>Institutional frameworks already recognise teaching development, but perception lags behind policy.</p> <p>Staff remain sceptical about CPD's career value.</p> <p>Clearer mapping between CPD and promotion criteria, alongside visible celebration of teaching achievements, will help shift culture from research-dominant narratives to a balanced academic identity.</p>	<p>Continue embedding CPD within PDR and mid-year reviews by placing it at the centre of performance discussions, promotion criteria, and institutional recognition to ensure it is valued and aligned with career progression.</p>	<p>CADI will work with HR and faculty leaders to further embed CPD within PDR and mid-year review processes, ensuring alignment with promotion and recognition frameworks.</p>	<p>Medium to Long (Start 2026 /2027)</p>

References

Advance HE (2020) *Annual review of Advance HE accredited CPD schemes 2018–19*. York: Advance HE.

Boud, D. and Brew, A. (2013) 'Reconceptualising academic work as professional practice: Implications for academic development', *International Journal for Academic Development*, 18(3), pp. 208–221.

Hitch, D., Mahoney, P. and Macfarlane, S. (2018) 'Professional development for sessional staff in higher education: A review of current evidence', *Higher Education Research & Development*, 37, (2), pp. 285–300.

Jisc (2022) *UK higher education teaching staff digital experience insights survey findings*. Bristol: Jisc.

Matthews, L. and Dobbins, K. (2020) 'The impact of engaging with a higher education institution's continuing professional development scheme: The assessors' perspectives', *International Journal for Academic Development*, 1-13.

Omland, M., Hontvedt, M., Siddiq, F., Amundrud, A., Hermansen, H., Mathisen, M.A.S., Rudningen, G. and Reiersen, F. (2025) 'Co-creation in higher education: A conceptual systematic review', *Higher Education*, 90(4), pp. 1017–1047.

Shah, M. and Nair, C.S. (2016) *A global perspective on private higher education*. Cambridge, MA: Chandos Publishing.

Stefani, L. (2003) 'What is staff and educational development?', in Kahn, P. and Baume, D. (eds.) *A guide to staff & educational development*. London: Kogan Page, pp. 9–23.