



**UNIVERSITY OF
PORTSMOUTH**

CADI CPD Review

Rethinking staff development in pressured academic environments

Central question: how do we make CPD feel useful, legitimate and possible?

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Acknowledgements

“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.”

“CADI has huge operational value.” and “I appreciate working in a university where there is a concentrated team that works on these things.”

“Teach Well has the most valuable CPD I have taken part in. It gave me the time, confidence and practical tools to reflect on my teaching, strengthen my teaching and feel part of a supportive community.”

Why CPD matters in HE now?

Increasingly important focus

Universities seek to balance academic excellence with continuous improvement.

CPD is a key mechanism for this.

Challenging

Strategic pressure

- TEF / NSS / Student experience
- Recruitment
- Inclusive practice
- AI
- Assessment changes.

Professional learning

- CPD enables staff to reflect on practice
- Adapt to change
- Develop pedagogically

Academic development

- CADI's role is not simply to deliver sessions
- But to support a culture of educational enhancement.

Discussion prompt - Is CPD currently seen as core academic work, or as an optional extra?

The scale thesis

CPD is not a marginal activity – it is a major institutional investment of time

2,629 FTE staff

average staff number at
UoP (2023/24)

20 hours each

a cautious annual estimate
of CPD per member of staff

52,580 hours

total CPD time across
one year

At this scale, CPD becomes a strategic issue, not just a programme of workshops.

What that means

- about 7,100 working days
- about 960 working weeks
- about 6 continuous years of human time

Why it matters

If CPD is poorly designed, we do not waste a few sessions — we misdirect thousands of hours.

The review started with a practical issue...

The visible issue

- Attendance
- Cancellations
- Uneven engagement
- How should it look?

The deeper issue

- Trust / workload
- Academic identity
- Institutional priorities
- Local cultures
- Whether development feels legitimate.

The design question

- How can CADI offer CPD that is central enough to be coherent
- But local enough to feel meaningful and owned?

Core argument: low engagement with CPD is rarely just about motivation. It is often about conditions, relevance and timing.

Activity 1: CPD in one word

When colleagues hear “CPD”, what do you think many feel first?

One word or short phrase



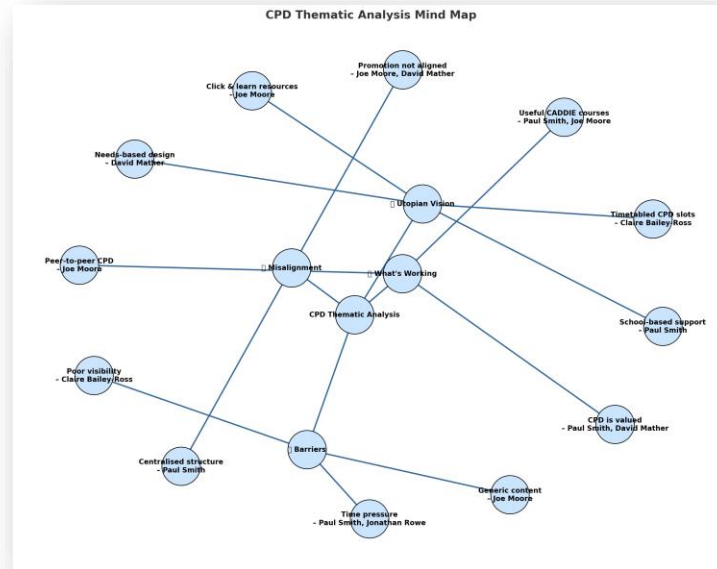
What the review explored

- To understand why academic staff engagement with CPD was uneven.
- To identify the main barriers to participation.
- To inform a better model across the university.

This review helps us understand a wider problem in higher education: how to make professional development meaningful in a system where staff are already overloaded.

The CADI REVIEW – how? (methodology)

- Semi-structured interviews with Deans, Associate Deans, and Associate Heads.
- Interviews (NOTES) were transcribed, (some minor redactions made)
- Participants have the right to withdraw (agreed dates).
- Setting of the interview very important.
- Thematic Analysis (Braun and Clarke – 6 stage method)



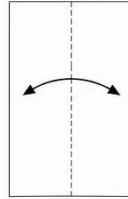
What is the biggest barrier?

How to make a University of Portsmouth CADI Paper Airplane

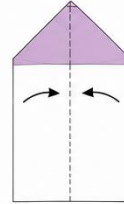


(Clegg and Armellini, 2026)

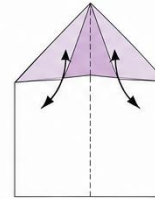
- 1** Start with a A4 sheet of paper.



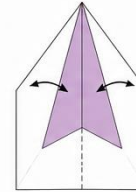
- 2** Fold in half lengthwise and unfold.



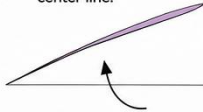
- 3** Fold the top two corners to the center line.



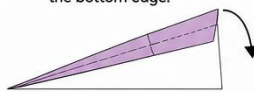
- 4** Fold the new top edges to the center line.



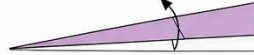
- 5** Fold the plane in half along the center line.



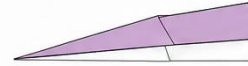
- 6** Fold the top wing down to align with the bottom edge.



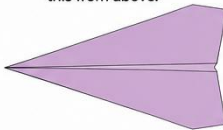
- 7** Fold the wing down again to create a sharper edge.



- 8** Repeat Steps 6–7 on the other side.

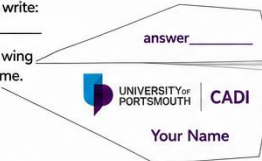


- 9** Your plane should look like this from above.



- 10** Add writing!

On one wing write:
answer _____
On the other wing
write your name.



- 11** Hold the plane near the back, aim, and throw gently forward.



(Clegg and Armellini, 2026)

Staff are not necessarily resistant to CPD. They are often protecting scarce time.

They value development

- but need it to connect to their work.

They want practical support

- but not generic solutions/
imposed centrally.

Institutional priorities

- but experience them through local workload and disciplinary realities.

This matters because the solution is not just more sessions. It is better alignment between purpose, timing, context and relationships.

Theme 1 – workload saturation/ time poverty

CPD often competes with urgent work, even when it is important work.

What this looks like

- Sign-ups without attendance
Cancellations close to the event
- Colleagues interested in development but unable to protect the time.

What it means

CPD must be designed around academic rhythms:

- Assessment periods
- Marking loads
- Programme deadlines
- Induction
- Course cycles
- School priorities.

Implication

- Do not measure success by bookings alone.
- Attendance/ conversion
- Repeat engagement
- Local follow-ups matter more.

What could CADI stop, shorten, combine or move so development becomes more possible?

Theme 2 - development or compliance?

The same session can be experienced differently depending on framing, timing, local relevance and relationships.



Developmental

Developmental CPD feels like...

Relevant, dialogic, reflective, supportive, intellectually credible and connected to practice.



Compliance-driven

Compliance-driven CPD feels like...

Required, generic, transactional, audit-facing or disconnected from the realities of teaching.

Academic colleagues often ask an implicit question:

“Will this help with my teaching, my students, my programme, my discipline?”

Central provision gives...

Coherence, visibility, consistency, shared language and institution-wide priorities.

Local ownership gives...

Relevance, legitimacy, disciplinary examples, peer trust and situated problem-solving.

The opportunity is...

A hybrid model: centrally supported, locally shaped, relationally delivered.

Theme 4 - CPD is relational

relationships, motivation and culture

People are more likely to engage when CPD is built through trust, credibility and collaboration.

Legitimacy

- Who is inviting staff into the conversation?
- Do they understand the context?
- Do they bring credible examples?

Motivation

Does CPD support immediate teaching practice, professional identity, progression, recognition or problem-solving?

Collaboration

Are colleagues passive recipients, or co-designers of development activity and future practice?

**Design
principle**

Move from “delivering CPD to staff” towards “developing practice with colleagues”.

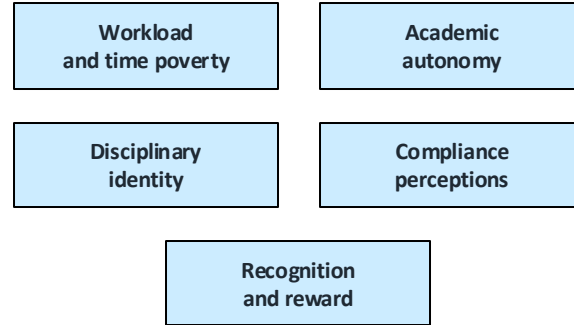
So, what does this mean?

The Portsmouth challenge

CADI has a robust CPD offer, but engagement is uneven and shaped by culture as much as provision.

The issue is not simply “attendance”.

The deeper questions are about how staff interpret CPD, what they believe it is for, and whether they feel able to protect time for it.



When staff do not attend, is it capacity, relevance, or legitimacy?

How can we get staff to attend and participate in CPD?

So, what does this mean?

Sector lens: voluntary CPD is hard to sustain

Across higher education, opt-in pedagogic development is often constrained by workload, incentives and relevance.

What the wider literature suggests

- Embedded expectations
- Contextual relevance
- Meaningful recognition
- Academic agency

From compliance to enhancement

Compliance-led CPD feels imposed, generic or performative.

Enhancement-led CPD feels useful, situated and owned by staff.

The practical risk is assuming that attendance equals impact.

It does not.

Discussion prompt: What would make CPD feel enhancement-led rather than compliance-led?

Positioning CADI - strength and next-stage challenge

CADI appears stronger than many fragmented or compliance-led models, but the next question is impact.

CADI's comparative strength

- coherent university-wide offer
- themed workshops
- peer-led sessions
- community events
- digital resources
- alignment with teaching priorities

The remaining tension

- CPD as poorly timed
- Not enough time
- Generic
- Extra to workload
- Insufficiently linked to recognition.

The direction of travel

Be-spoke

So, the review moves the question from:

How do we increase attendance?

to:

How do we make CPD meaningful, protected and recognised?

What should we prioritise?

Imagine CADI can focus on three changes over the next academic year.
Which would make the biggest difference?

A Campaign model

B Faculty/school co-design

C Shorter and more flexible formats

D Better data and follow-up

E CPD linked to recognition/progression

F More local communities of practice

Risks to avoid

Risk 1: more activity, same problem

Adding more sessions without addressing workload, timing or relevance may increase cancellations and frustration.

Risk 2: centralisation without ownership

A coherent central offer can still feel distant if local academic cultures are not involved in design and delivery.

Risk 3: data without interpretation

Attendance data matters, but it must be read alongside workload, context, relationships and impact stories.

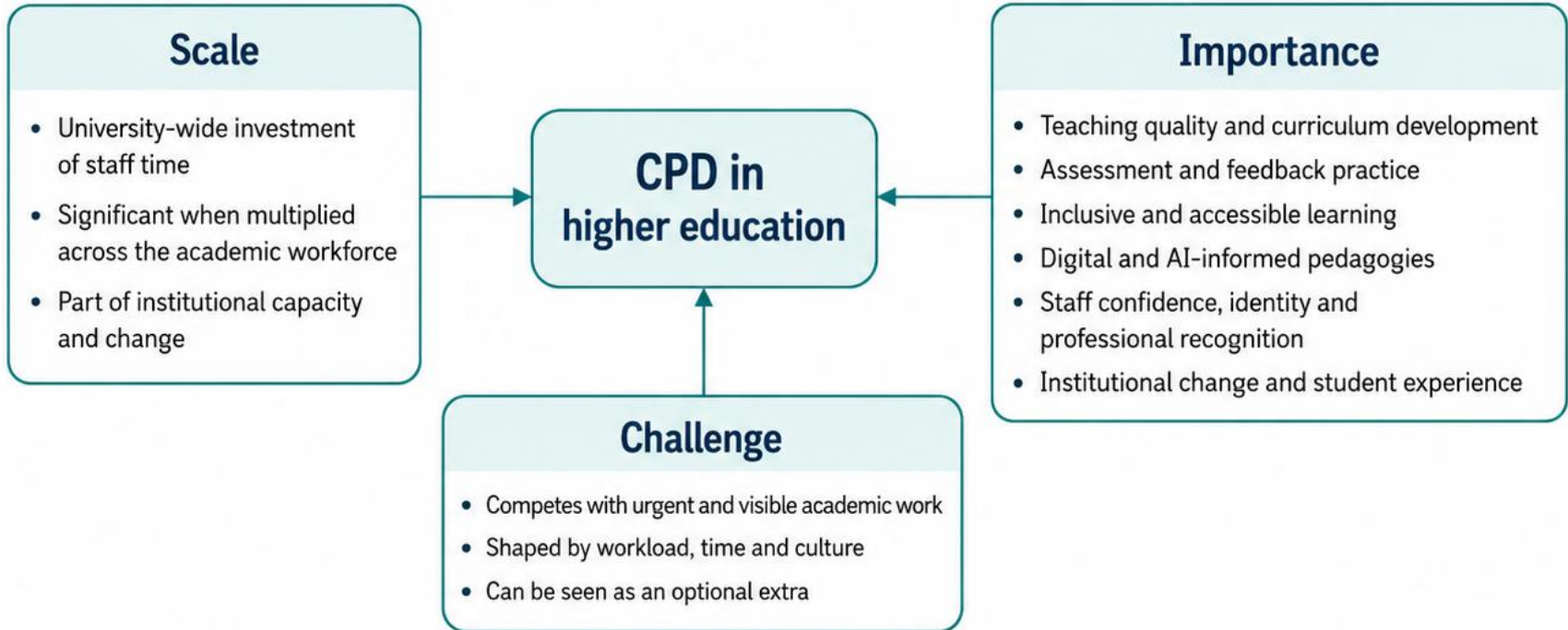
Conditions for success

- Protected time and realistic expectations.
- Visible links between CPD, teaching enhancement, recognition and progression.
- Local partnership with schools and faculties.
- Evaluation that captures meaning, impact and changes in practice.



Why CPD matters in HE

Scale, importance and challenge in a pressured university context



A more sustainable CPD model

Possible

Designed around workload, timing and academic rhythms.

Contextual

Linked to schools, programmes, disciplines and real examples.

Relational

Built through trust, collaboration and local ownership.

Purposeful

Clear about why this matters, why now, and what staff will gain.

Connected

Linked to recognition, progression, enhancement and student experience.

The aim is not to make CPD bigger. The aim is to make it better placed, better owned and better connected.

Final thought

CPD should not be another demand placed on academic staff.

At its best, it should create space, language and relationships for better practice.

The next step is to move from a CPD programme to a CPD culture: one that is purposeful, contextualised, collaborative and sustainable.

Questions / reflections

What is one thing we should protect and one thing we should change?

