Northumbria Research Link

Integrating New Research Faculty into the UK Computer Science Education Community

Abstract

A vibrant Computer Science Education (CSE) Community of Practice is emerging in the United Kingdom and Ireland (UK&I), promoted by national and international professional body/learned society specialist interest groups and supported through a number of CSE research and practice conferences. This workshop explores how this community of practice addresses the needs of new academics to UK&I higher education and what opportunities there are to bring together and develop new academics as part of this community.

The complex and contested demands of learning and teaching in UK&I higher education make the early career of an academic challenging [4] and potentially lonely [1], especially when balanced against their research aspirations, and wider professional service commitments. Learning and teaching development in the UK commonly involves working towards Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy [2] (now known as AdvanceHE), either by direct application or by an accredited university postgraduate course. Typically, this is supported by mentoring from within a department. The quality of learning provided will be promoted in part by the strength of the community of practice operating within the department [3] and the communities of practice that exist at a national and international level [4].

At the workshop attendees will participate in a qualitative research exercise, to shape and develop a proposal to further promote the value of new academics engaging with CSE research to enhance their own learning and teaching activities. In particular, addressing:

1. What current and future opportunities are there to engage new CS faculty with the UK&I CSE community of practice?
2. What is the potential to supplement institutional academic/research development opportunities with national developmental opportunities?

3. How can we continue to raise the profile and value of new CS research faculty engaging with CSE research?

The workshop would consists of two hours, online remote activity. By attending, early-career computer science faculty would gain a better appreciation for the opportunities there are to engage and obtain support from the UK&I CSE research community. Experienced academics, would gain a better appreciation for the development needs of their colleagues and how this augments their research and learning and teaching roles. All participants will have the opportunity to help shape a proposal for enhanced support for new academics.

CCS Concepts: • **Social and professional topics → Computing education**.

Keywords: computer science education, community, induction

References

[1] Kenneth E. Foote and Michael N. Solem. 2009. Toward better mentoring for early career faculty: results of a study of US geographers. *International Journal for Academic Development* 14, 1 (2009), 47–58. https://doi.org/10.1080/13601440802659403

[2] Advance HE. 2020. Fellowship. https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/fellowship/fellowship

[3] Klara Bolander Laksov, Sarah Mann, and Lars Owe Dahlgren. 2008. Developing a community of practice around teaching: a case study. *Higher Education Research & Development* 27, 2 (2008), 121–132. https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360701805259

[4] J. Denard Thomas, Laura Gail Lunsford, and Helena A. Rodrigues. 2015. Early career academic staff support: evaluating mentoring networks. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 37, 3 (2015), 320–329. https://doi.org/10.1080/1360080X.2015.1034426