

Senior Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy

Guidance notes

Senior Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy

These guidance notes provide you with an overview of the process required to apply for Senior Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy (HEA).

Fellowship of the HEA is awarded to professionals who can demonstrate they meet the criteria of Descriptor 3 (D3) of the [UK Professional Standards Framework](#) for teaching and supporting learning in higher education.

By applying to be a Senior Fellow of the HEA you will present a thorough understanding of effective approaches to teaching and learning support as a key contribution to high quality student learning. You should be able to provide evidence of:

- D3.I Successful engagement across all five Areas of Activity.
- D3.II Appropriate knowledge and understanding across all aspects of Core Knowledge.
- D3.III A commitment to all the Professional Values.
- D3.IV Successful engagement in appropriate teaching practices related to the Areas of Activity.
- D3.V Successful incorporation of subject and pedagogic research and/or scholarship within the above activities, as part of an integrated approach to academic practice.
- D3.VI Successful engagement in continuing professional development in relation to teaching, learning, assessment, scholarship and, as appropriate, related academic or professional practices.
- D3.VII Successful coordination, support, supervision, management and/or mentoring of others (whether individuals and/or teams) in relation to learning and teaching.

By applying to become a Senior Fellow you will have the opportunity to:

- reflect on and thereby enhance the quality and effectiveness of your work in the area of teaching and supporting learning in higher education;
- model good practice for other staff and be able to encourage and support them to seek recognition for their work in this area;
- increase your influence and impact by gaining national and increasingly international recognition for your contribution to teaching and the support of learning within the higher educational context.

The [UK Professional Standards Framework \(UKPSF\)](#) is central to the recognition of individuals as Senior Fellows. You will need a working knowledge of its contents in order to prepare your application.

What are the main evidence requirements for Senior Fellowship?

There are two main elements to your application:

- an Account of Professional Practice (APP);
- supporting statements from two referees (REF).

The APP consists of:

- a reflective commentary on your higher education roles, responsibilities and professional experience;
- two case studies outlining contributions you have made to learning and teaching in higher education which demonstrate how you have organised, led and/or managed specific aspects of teaching and learning provisions.

Your Account of Professional Practice (APP)

When preparing your APP, there are some general principles to consider:

- Senior Fellowship is based on meeting Descriptor 3 (D3) of the UKPSF and your APP is the core of your application. Your reflective commentary and case studies should explain how you meet the requirements set out in Descriptor 3 of the UKPSF.
- There will be considerable variation in applications, reflecting differences in individuals' experience, their job roles and institutional contexts. The reflective commentary and two case studies enable such diversity to be appropriately represented.
- Your application is a claim for Senior Fellowship and as such should include appropriate rationale for the choices made and any evidence of success, influence and impact in teaching and/or supporting learning. All your evidence will be based on real examples of practice that draw upon scholarly activity in learning and teaching.
- Provide selective examples of practice in your APP and ensure they have direct relevance to your claim for Senior Fellowship. The quality of your evidence is much more important than the quantity of examples you provide. Where you reflect on any historical professional practice as part of your evidence, ensure you then reflect on its current impact on your or others' professional practice and on the wider learning and teaching context.
- Your APP should make clear how you apply the Core Knowledge and Professional Values to the evidence in your APP. This alignment of your work to the UKPSF is essential. The evidence should be incorporated across your APP in both your reflective commentary and case studies.
- Your APP is a personal account and its focus throughout should be on your own professional practice and decision-making.
- Your application is centred round a process of continuing professional development which demonstrates your thorough understanding of effective approaches to teaching and/or learning support.
- It is important that you address all the Dimensions of the UKPSF. Given the complex and integrative nature of professional practice for Senior Fellow, avoid a mechanistic or tick-box mapping approach to ensure full coverage. Refer to our guidance notes on the [Dimensions of Practice](#) to support your understanding of the Dimensions.
- A critical characteristic of Senior Fellows is that they are able to demonstrate the successful co-ordination, support, supervision, management and/or mentoring of others (whether individuals or teams) in relation to learning and teaching. Ensure you sufficiently evidence this in your APP.

- The overall word count for the APP is **6,000 plus up to 500 words in citations (overall maximum of 6,500 words - please note that the online system will not exceed this limit)**. This is your combined reflective commentary and two case studies. It is at your discretion how you wish to split your overall word count across the case studies and reflective commentary sections. Throughout your application, the quality of reflection on and of your professional practice should be the focus of your narrative, rather than the description.
- Any citations to publications, journals, books and websites you choose to include will be accommodated in addition to your APP. Include these after the relevant section of your APP.
- If you wish, use the space provided in this guidance to draft your evidence for each section of your APP. Alternatively, you can directly draft and save your applications as you go along in [MyAcademy](#).
- All the experience and evidence included in your application must relate to HE provision such as:
 - level 4 or above within the [Framework for Higher Education Qualifications \(FHEQ\)](#) in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, or equivalent;
 - level 7 or above within the [Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework \(SCQF\) in Scotland](#) on the Framework for Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions (FQHEIS);
 - first cycle or above of the [Qualifications Framework in the European Higher Education Area \(QF- EHEA\)](#);
 - level 5 or above of the [Australian Qualifications Framework](#);
 - level 5 or above of the [New Zealand Qualification Framework](#);
 - other equivalent higher education frameworks;
 - delivery of non-accredited continuing professional development for academic and learning support staff may also be considered as evidence equivalent to the higher education academic frameworks.

Further information can be found at <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance>.

Reflective commentary

In preparing your reflective commentary, focus in particular on the education, training, employment, roles and experience which have contributed to your professional development as teacher, mentor, facilitator of learning and academic leader. You might include informal activities whether individual, collaborative or team-based, that you believe have had a significant impact on your academic practice and/or on the practice of others. Highlight the primary influences on your own development, focusing on the progressive attainment of your professional capabilities and how you and others have benefitted from the continuous learning and development process involved.

You may wish to reflect on:

- Career milestones
 - roles and responsibilities related to teaching and supporting learning;
 - relevant qualifications obtained from formal professional development.
- Areas of research, scholarship and/or professional practice
 - relevant publications and/or presentations;
 - incorporation of research, scholarship and/or professional practice into teaching and supporting learning;
 - links with professional bodies or wider communities.
- Involvement in teaching and learning initiatives
 - institutional/nationally funded projects;
 - small-medium scale investigations or awards;

- work with professional bodies;
- development and/or adoption of learning and teaching themes, for example, internationalisation,
- employability, assessment and feedback, retention, flexible learning, education for sustainability;
- dissemination of teaching and learning related expertise.
- Recognition and reward
 - teaching prizes, fellowships, institutional awards for innovation;
 - professional body recognition.
- Collaborating with others
 - advisory, support, co-ordination roles in teaching and supporting learning;
 - leadership and management roles.
- Educational and staff development activity
 - mentor roles in professional development programmes for new and inexperienced staff;
 - learning and teaching workshops/seminars
 - related publications/documents.
- Leadership, management and organisational roles within an institutional or wider higher education context
 - learning and teaching/quality enhancement committees;
 - programme design, approval and review process;
 - quality assurance roles and responsibilities.

If you wish, use this space to draft your reflective commentary

Case studies

In this section of your application, provide reflective accounts of two particular contributions or experiences which:

- have had a significant impact upon the co-ordination, support, supervision, management and/or mentoring of others (whether individuals and/or teams), in relation to learning and teaching
- demonstrate your sustained effectiveness in relation to learning and teaching and that you meet the criteria for Senior Fellowship

Use the two case studies to address different aspects of Descriptor 3, with a focus on your organisation, leadership and/or management of specific aspects of learning and teaching provision. You might include informal activities, whether individual, collaborative or team-based, that have had a significant impact on your academic practice and/or on the practice of others. The emphasis should be on your effectiveness in relation to learning and teaching and should incorporate how you have led, organised or managed specific aspects of learning and teaching provision. At least one of your case studies should focus on a situation where you worked with others using your skills, knowledge and awareness in leading, managing or organising programmes, subjects and/or disciplinary areas.

You should clearly demonstrate an integrated and reflective approach to academic practice that incorporates research, scholarship and/or professional practice.

Focus on particular aspects of your work such as:

Developing quality enhancement

- ways you interact with others to ensure appropriate alignment of teaching, learning and assessment practices;
- how you ensure that student learning within the context of your responsibilities is enriched by disciplinary and pedagogic research, scholarship and professional practice (your own and that of others);
- ways you have fostered dynamic approaches to learning and teaching through creativity and innovation.

Supporting other colleagues

- how you have supported other colleagues to enhance their practices;
- specific examples of how you have enhanced academic practice through co-ordinating/managing others;
- your roles in learning and teaching projects and initiatives at departmental, institutional or in the wider HE context;
- course and programme development, review and revalidation.

Sustained engagement with educational and staff development

- staff development activities you have facilitated (informal and formal) that enhance your colleagues'
- abilities to meet the dimensions of the UKPSF;
- how your contributions have promoted the student learning experience through professional development of staff under your influence and guidance e.g. through informal or formal mentoring arrangements;
- how you have disseminated your knowledge and skills in teaching and supporting learning to audiences both within and external to your institution.

Evaluation of academic Practice

- steps you have taken to develop your own practice and how you have used your own experience to enable others to reflect on and critique their own practice;

- how you support, encourage and implement evaluation processes designed to enhance the student learning experience.

Casestudy1

If you wish, use this space to draft case study 1

Casestudy2

If you wish, use this space to draft case study 2

Referees

Your application must be supported by statements from two referees. The function of your referees is to provide an informed peer review of your eligibility for Senior Fellow, using their knowledge of your work and the context in which you teach and/or support learning. The referees should be individuals in a position to comment and substantiate your record of effectiveness in relation to teaching and the support of learning in higher education. Referees are expected to comment directly on the content of your APP and will need to view your application to enable them to provide an effective reference. They should be provided with a copy of [guidance notes for referees](#). At least one of your references should be a Fellow, Senior Fellow, Principal Fellow of the HEA or an appropriate experienced member of staff working for a higher education institution. All referees need to be familiar with the UKPSF.

When you have received your references, save them ready for uploading in the recognition application system in [MyAcademy](#). The HEA reserves the right to contact your referees for clarification so please ensure they include verifiable contact details.

Applying for Senior Fellowship via MyAcademy

The online fellowship application will guide you through each stage of the process. Your application will be saved as you progress and is structured around the APP. You can save drafts of your application and return to complete it at a later date.

Once you have completed your APP, uploaded your references, paid the appropriate fee and submitted your application, it will then be subject to review by a fellowship panel made up of three accreditors.

An application for Senior Fellow can be made at any time during the year. The length of time it will take to process your application is dependent on the dates of our review panels. The HEA holds regular review panels each month to accommodate demand and typically you will be notified within 6-8 weeks.

Upon the successful attainment of your Fellowship you will be able to download your certificate from within [MyAcademy](#).

What do you need to do to apply?

In summary, to apply you need to:

1. Prepare and write your APP, i.e. your reflective commentary and two case studies;
2. obtain two referee statements;
3. Register your details with the HEA's [MyAcademy](#) and complete the online fellowship application;
4. Upload your referee statements;
5. Pay the appropriate fee.

Paying of your application

Employees of subscribing institutions can apply for a subsidised rate. If you are from a subscribing institution the fee is £300. If you are from a non-subscribing institution or independent the fee is £600. If you are unsure of your status please see further details in our terms and conditions for professional recognition and a definition of employment.

Payment is required by debit or credit card when you submit your application in [MyAcademy](#). You can pay this yourself at the time you submit or, if you are receiving financial support from your institution, there is an option for someone else to pay on your behalf. In both instances you will be sent a reference code to be able to make the payment.

Institutions and bulk payments

If an institution is paying for a number of applicants, each applicant will be able to select at the payment stage that another is paying on their behalf. A reference code will be provided and the applicant should give this code to their institution. Whoever is responsible for making the payment from the institution can sign into MyAcademy and make a payment on an institutional credit/debit card using that reference code (or multiple codes if paying for more than one individual). An institution can enter reference numbers for multiple individuals but the number of payments may be restricted depending on the debit/credit card limit.

How will your application be reviewed?

Your application will be reviewed by a panel of three independent accreditors as part of a peer review process. Accreditors are selected for their experience of external review, their understanding of the UKPSF, as well as for their knowledge and experience of teaching and learning in higher education. The accreditor pool includes education specialists and practitioners from a range of disciplines across the higher education sector. The accreditors will review your application and look for evidence that your approach to teaching/supporting and managing learning is grounded in an understanding of how learners develop knowledge and practice within your discipline or role. Your evidence should therefore be reflective, not just descriptive. Accreditors will

also look for indications of how you evaluate your effectiveness and how you develop your approach in the light of your experience and continuing professional development. A holistic approach to reviewing your application will be adopted and accreditors will seek evidence from across your application.

Guidance notes and evaluation grids for our accreditors are provided, explaining how they are expected to make professional judgements on Senior Fellowship applications.

In rare cases HEA staff will act as arbitrators, for example where there is a discrepancy or conflict of interest. Should your application be judged to provide insufficient evidence for meeting the criteria, it will be referred back to you with constructive advice to revise your application and evidence. In some instances it may be that you would be encouraged to reapply for a different category of Fellowship. You will be offered one opportunity to resubmit without further charge, after which if your application is unsuccessful, you have the option of reapplying at further cost.

You can check the status of your application by logging into “My Fellowship” in MyAcademy.

Appeals and complaints

Appeals and complaints can be made in accordance with the HEA Accreditation, Recognition and Reward Appeals Policy.

What if I have other questions?

If you cannot find the information you need or require further assistance, please email fellowship@heacademy.ac.uk and one of our team will be able to assist you. You can also call us on (+44) 01904717500.