

## Writing your application for AFHEA: A5 (transcript)

**Slide 1:** Hello. My name is Eileen Hyder. I work in the ADE team within CQSD and I manage the FLAIR CPD Scheme. We've developed this screencast to support you with writing the A5 section of your application for Associate Fellowship. We'll use it to pass on some information and tips that you should find useful.

**Slide 2:** As you know, all applications for Fellowship are underpinned by the PSF. And, as you also know, the PSF is divided into Descriptors and Dimensions. The Descriptors correspond to the categories of Fellowship – you're aiming for Associate Fellowship which is D1. And there are 3 Dimensions of Practice that outline the things people do if they teach or support learning in Higher Education, the things they need to know to carry out those activities and the values that should underpin their practice.

**Slide 3:** To put a good application together you have to understand how the Descriptors and the Dimensions interrelate. To do that you need to look at the statements under each Descriptor as they explain how the Dimensions have to be exemplified at each category of Fellowship. There are six statements for D1. The structure of the application is driven by the Areas of Activity and you draw on the Core Knowledge and Professional Values when writing about what you do with students. You'll see that the first statement says that D1 applicants have to demonstrate successful engagement with at least two of the five Areas of Activity.

**Slide 4:** On the FLAIR Scheme we require D1 applicants to do three Areas of Activity. They can choose any two from A1-A4, but all applicants have to do A5 which is about continuing professional development. This reflects the importance of CPD within the sector but also institutionally (professional development is embedded within the Professional Behaviours expected of all staff working at the University of Reading). Writing about your professional development is, therefore, a compulsory part of your application for AFHEA.

**Slide 5:** It's worth spending a moment looking closely at the words in A5 so you're very clear about what you might include within the 600 words you write.

**Slide 6:** The first thing to draw your attention to is that A5 sets an expectation that you will engage in professional development relating to your subject or discipline. So one thing you might include in A5 are the things you've done to develop your subject knowledge.

**Slide 7:** But there's also an expectation that you will engage in professional development around teaching and learning by developing your pedagogic knowledge. And it's worth remembering that some aspects of pedagogy are generic and used by all teachers but there are also specific methods that are used in some subjects and not others. For example, someone teaching Chemistry will have to know how to promote learning in laboratory settings but this won't be relevant for other teachers. So, think about whether there are any signature pedagogies that are specifically relevant for your discipline. If so, then when you write your A5 section you can include examples of how you have developed this aspect of your pedagogic knowledge as well as your general pedagogic knowledge.

**Slide 8:** Within A5 you also see an expectation that you will be engaging with relevant literature and scholarship in order to develop your practice...

**Slide 9:** ...and that you are evaluating what you do – getting feedback from students and colleagues to help you to enhance your practice.

You can see there's a lot you can draw on so finding ideas for your A5 section shouldn't be difficult and that should be reassuring for you.

**Slide 10:** And I'd also like to draw your attention to the use of the word 'appropriate' within these Descriptor statements. The people who assess D1 applications are realistic about what CPD might be expected from someone at your career stage. They won't be expecting the breadth they'd expect from someone with many years of experience behind them. Hopefully that is also reassuring for you.

**Slide 11:** So let's move on now to thinking about the type of examples you might include in your A5 section. The activities listed here are some of the things people do to develop their subject specific and pedagogic knowledge...

**Slide 12:** ...and here are a few more. I've split the list over two slides because the examples on this slide are likely to be internal, whereas the ideas on the previous slide might be internal or external. It's fine to have a combination of both – just as it's fine to have a combination of formal and informal CPD.

**Slide 13:** Given that there's an expectation of engaging with research and scholarship you could include some information on how you've done that. It might be that you subscribe to some journals or you might have taken part in a reading group where there was discussion of scholarly literature or it might be that you've done some private reading to develop an aspect of your practice. Anything like this would be relevant.

**Slide 14:** And this slide has some ideas for showing how you evaluate your practice. It might be through learning from colleagues, for example, through being observed; through engaging with feedback from students, or through your own private reflections.

**Slide 15:** So, now that we've thought about **what** you might write, let's think about **how** you might write it. Although it might seem obvious, it's still worth pointing out that it's a good idea to write a proper introduction to each section. Lots of people use the introduction to their A5 section to make a statement about their commitment to CPD. Sometimes that's a simple statement like this...

**Slide 16:** ...and sometimes it's something more detailed like this. As with every aspect of your application there's no formula, but it is a good idea if the introduction to your A5 section suggests that you are someone who recognises the importance of CPD and is committed to it.

**Slide 17:** After that you need to choose which aspects of your CPD you'll focus on. This slide summarises the themes we've talked about so far: developing your subject-specific knowledge, your pedagogic knowledge, your understanding of the pedagogic literature and how you evaluate your practice. You'll see I'm recommending a certain way of thinking about things as you're planning what to write. First of all, think about what you did – was it attending a workshop – or observing a colleague – or finding relevant literature to read to support you with developing an area of your practice? Next think about what you learned from that activity. And finally think about what you did with that professional learning – how

did you use what you learned to do things better or differently? Obviously you won't be able to write about all these aspects of CPD within 600 words – if you do that, it's likely that what you write will be thin and superficial and that won't satisfy the assessors. I'd recommend choosing 3 or 4 examples so that you have space to explain what you did and the impact it had on you in some depth. Remember, that ultimately what you're trying to show is that, because you've taken responsibility for developing your professional practice, you are able to provide positive learning experiences for the students you work with.

**Slide 18:** I thought it might be useful to show you a couple of examples from D1 applications. This example focuses on learning from observation. You might like to pause the screencast to read it.

**Slide 19:** And this example is about engaging with CPD events such as workshops and webinars. Again you could pause now to read it through.

**Slide 20:** So these are our suggestions and recommendations for writing your A5 section. I hope you've found the screencast useful. We wish you well with drafting your application.