

AFHEA Pathway for Doctoral Researchers

Guide for drafting a supporting statement (D1)

Thank you for agreeing to provide a supporting statement for an AFHEA applicant via the pathway for doctoral researchers. Advance HE requires a form of validation for all Fellowship applications and the supporting statements cover this requirement. Reviewers read the supporting statements very carefully and consider them in relation to the application - they therefore represent a key part in the assessment process. Given the importance of the statement you are providing, we have developed this guidance to help you to draft it. The guidance is organised into three parts:

1. Drafting the supporting statement
2. The UKPSF
3. Examples of supporting statements

Drafting the supporting statement

We provide a proforma for the supporting statement. If you are internal to the University of Reading you will find the proforma on our website - <https://www.reading.ac.uk/reading-cqsd/Developing-and-enhancing/training-professional-development/cqsd-afheapgrresources.aspx>. The applicant will provide it if you are external to the institution.

The proforma is divided into two parts:

- Part 1: Declarations
- Part 2: Supporting statement

Part 1: Declarations

This section contains a series of boxes. These are important as they provide the reviewers with key information about you and ultimately confirm that you are an appropriate person to provide a supporting statement for this applicant.

Please check you have completed every box before you return the document to the applicant as incomplete applications will be returned by the panel which might delay the review process.

Part 2: Supporting statement

This is also divided into two parts. The first part is an expandable text box where you write the actual supporting statement. The indicative word limit for the statement is **500 words**.

In essence an application represents a claim on behalf of the applicant that he/she deserves to be recognised as an HEA Associate Fellow because their practice aligns with the expectations in the UKPSF (for more information about the UKPSF, please see Section 2 of this guide). The purpose of your statement is to support the claims made by the applicant, thereby acting as validation of the application. You can only do this if you have read the application and Part 1 of the proforma requires you to tick a box to confirm that you have done so. The first stage, therefore, is to read the application and to make yourself aware of which elements of practice/experience the applicant is basing their application on and what claims for impact they are making. Having read the application, you can now begin to write your supporting statement.

One way of approaching the writing of the supporting statement would be to structure your comments around the Areas of Activity (A1-5) of the UKPSF the applicant has chosen to focus on:

- the applicant's experience of designing/planning learning (A1);
- the methods they use in their teaching and/or to support learning (A2);
- their experience of assessment and feedback (A3);
- how they create an effective learning environment and provide support for students (A4);
- their commitment to CPD and evidence-based practice (A5).

It is important that your statement contains specific examples from your own knowledge of the applicant's practice. The comments you write and examples you give should only relate to the contents of the application. You may wish to elaborate on the claims they have made but you should not introduce any new claims – new claims will be disregarded by the reviewers.

The timeframe covered in the application should be current, usually the past 1-2 years in the case of doctoral researchers. If the applicant decides to reflect on any earlier professional practice, then he/she must reflect on and draw out its current impact to signpost that it is still relevant for inclusion.

You should cross-reference your examples to the Core Knowledge and Professional Values of the UKPSF. You may, if you wish, also make reference to the Descriptors of the UKPSF. Sample illustrative comments are provided in Section 3 of this guidance

Part 2 of the proforma is a summary table where you transfer the alignment to the Dimensions of the UKPSF made in the statement to one place so reviewers can see at a glance which Dimensions are covered. It is unlikely that your supporting statement will cover every Dimension. Don't worry about this. Coverage of the full range of Dimensions comes from the two supporting statement taken together - there is no expectation that each statement will cover every Dimension. It is the applicant's responsibility to check all Dimensions have been covered by their supporters as they prepare the application for final submission.

Finally please sign and date the supporting statement. You should then **return the statement to the applicant** who will import it into their final submission document.

If you have any queries, please contact either Eileen Hyder, who manages the scheme, (e.m.hyder@reading.ac.uk) or the scheme's administrator, Jackie Ward (j.ward@reading.ac.uk), and we will be happy to help.

Once again, many thanks for agreeing to provide this supporting statement.

THE UKPSF

The UKPSF (UK Professional Standards Framework) is a framework which presents the practice of teaching and supporting learning in HE in terms of Descriptors and Dimensions.

Descriptors:

These describe:

1. typical roles for each of the four categories of Fellowship that can be awarded;
2. what the applicant must demonstrate to be awarded Fellowship (i.e. they are the assessment criteria).

Dimensions: there are 3 Dimensions of Practice:

- Areas of Activity (what we do when we are teaching/supporting learning);
- Core Knowledge (what we need to know in order to carry out the activities);
- Professional Values (the beliefs that underpin practice).

The Descriptors for D1 are given below. You will see that the Descriptor statements refer to the Dimensions. While the applicant is assessed against the Descriptors, he/she cannot meet them without covering the Dimensions. When writing your supporting statement you should signpost which of the Dimensions are illustrated by the points you are making. You indicate this in two ways:

1. By placing the Dimensions in brackets within the text you are writing
2. By transferring the individual Dimension references to the summary table at the end of the proforma.

Some illustrative comments are provided in Section 3 below

UKPSF: Descriptor 1

DESCRIPTOR 1: ASSOCIATE FELLOW	
Applicants at D1 demonstrate an understanding of specific aspects of effective teaching, learning support methods and student learning. Individuals should be able to provide evidence of:	
D1.1	Successful engagement with at least two of the five Areas of Activity
D1.2	Successful engagement in appropriate teaching and practices related to these Areas of Activity
D1.3	Appropriate Core Knowledge and understanding of at least K1 and K2
D1.4	A commitment to appropriate Professional Values in facilitating others' learning
D1.5	Relevant professional practices, subject and pedagogic research and/or scholarship within the above activities
D1.6	Successful engagement, where appropriate, in professional development activity related to teaching, learning and assessment responsibilities

Areas of Activity	Core Knowledge	Professional Values
<p>A1 Design and plan learning activities and/or programmes of study</p> <p>A2 Teach and/or support learning</p> <p>A3 Assess and give feedback to learners</p> <p>A4 Develop effective learning environments and approaches to student support and guidance</p> <p>A5 Engage in continuing professional development in subjects/disciplines and their pedagogy, incorporating research, scholarship and the evaluation of professional practices</p>	<p>K1 The subject material</p> <p>K2 Appropriate methods for teaching, learning and assessing in the subject area and at the level of the academic programme</p> <p>K3 How students learn, both generally and within their subject/disciplinary area(s)</p> <p>K4 The use and value of appropriate learning technologies</p> <p>K5 Methods for evaluating the effectiveness of teaching</p> <p>K6 The implications of quality assurance and quality enhancement for academic and professional practice with a particular focus on teaching</p>	<p>V1 Respect individual learners and diverse learning communities</p> <p>V2 Promote participation in higher education and equality of opportunity for learners</p> <p>V3 Use evidence-informed approaches and the outcomes from research, scholarship and continuing professional development</p> <p>V4 Acknowledge the wider context in which higher education operates recognising the implications for professional practice</p>

Section 3: Examples of supporting statements

Example 1

Please write your supporting statement in the space below drawing out how the applicant meets the Dimensions of the UKPSF at D1. Please include practical examples to support your comments.

The indicative word count for references is 500 words in total. Please expand the space below as necessary.

Lana supports practical classes for undergraduate and masters students. Classes range in size from 15 to 50 students. She is responsible for preparing materials in the laboratory or field, in readiness for the class, and in demonstrating whilst the class is running. Lana supports learning by introducing the theory behind the equipment and associated techniques and then demonstrates the operation of equipment and the expected results. At this point Lana encourages questions, and her answers and repeated demonstrations, reinforce the information and build the confidence of the students before they undertake the task independently. She then observes the students and using her experience and knowledge, provides formative feedback and guides them through the operations as necessary to ensure that students achieve the learning outcomes. Lana recognises that the students have very different levels of practical skills and knowledge and she adapts her approach accordingly, always spending more time with those who need longer to carry out, and understand the task. **A2, K1, K2, K3, K4, K5, V1, V2**

Whilst preparing for classes, Lana ensures that all equipment is functioning correctly and she runs through the class handouts to check that the protocols are clearly defined and accurate. Once satisfied, she places these, and other relevant support material, on Blackboard before the classes are scheduled to run. This allows the students to gain some understanding of what the class will entail, to think ahead, prepare and consider questions that they may have at the beginning of the class.

Lana also provides opportunities for students to explore how their learning may be applied when considering career options. This additional learning environment supplements the practical classes and allows the students to engage informally with Lana and build a strong relationship that contributes to a positive learning culture. Following practical classes, students are able to contact Lana either face to face or by email to request further clarification and assistance when completing practical work. **A4, K1, K2, K3, K4, V4**

Lana engages in continuing professional development. She attends workshops and training events. Lana attends lectures in her field to ensure that she has an excellent understanding of the subject material and her involvement in supporting research projects enables her to continue to expand her development. **A5, K1, K4, V3, V4**

Please indicate which Dimensions of the UKPSF are demonstrated in your supporting statement.

Areas of Activity					Core Knowledge						Professional Values			
A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	K1	K2	K3	K4	K5	K6	V1	V2	V3	V4
	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X

Example 2

Please write your supporting statement in the space below drawing out how the applicant meets the Dimensions of the UKPSF at D1. Please include practical examples to support your comments.
The indicative word count for references is 500 words in total. Please expand the space below as necessary.

Martha is a thoughtful and reflective colleague who is always seeking to develop her teaching practice, particularly in the area of using TEL to enable effective student engagement and to create effective learning environments.

Designing and planning learning activities

Soon after joining the team, Martha was asked to plan and create some welcome sessions. Martha carefully thought about the aims of the session, did some wider reading and research into effective transition to university, and asked colleagues for advice on designing the sessions. Although the sessions were held in a large lecture theatre which was not very conducive to interaction, Martha successfully incorporated voting activities, use of screencasts, and opportunities for short discussions in pairs to enable students to reflect on their current practices and get to know each other. Feedback on the sessions was very positive. Despite this, Martha is using the feedback to enhance the sessions further for next year. These aspects of Martha’s work map on to the UKPSF at: A1, A2, A5, K1, K2, K3, K4, K5, K6, V1, V2, V3, V4.

Innovative practice and use of TEL

Martha is very open to using new learning technologies in order to develop her teaching practices. After attending a training session on the use of APPs, she introduced the phone voting tool Mentimeter into her sessions to encourage effective reflection and interaction amongst students. I was impressed at how she used Mentimeter to create effective learning environments especially for particularly large groups or groups that may be unwilling to ask questions directly. Martha shared this good practice with the rest of the team, and gave me feedback on how to use the APP. Thanks to Martha’s influence, I now use Mentimeter in my own teaching, and have also cascaded it on to other colleagues. These aspects of Martha’s work map on to the UKPSF at: A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, K2, K3, K4, V2, V3.

Developing effective learning environments

Martha is a reflective practitioner who is always keen to learn from the experience of colleagues. When she joined the team, Martha undertook some observation of colleagues, asking thoughtful questions to develop her practice. As she has become more experienced herself, she has shared her own examples of supporting students with the team (e.g. supporting students in one-to-one sessions). It is clear that Martha respects individual learners and aims to tailor her support to their individual learning needs. Martha has also created effective online learning environments through developing screencasts to add to our online resources using a research-informed approach to these creating learning materials. These aspects of Martha’s work map on to the UKPSF at: A2, A4, A5, K1, K2, K3, K4, K5, V1, V2, V3.

Please indicate which Dimensions of the UKPSF are demonstrated in your supporting statement.

Areas of Activity	Core Knowledge	Professional Values
-------------------	----------------	---------------------

A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	K1	K2	K3	K4	K5	K6	V1	V2	V3	V4
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X

Example 3

Please write your supporting statement in the space below drawing out how the applicant meets the Dimensions of the UKPSF at D1. Please include practical examples to support your comments.

The indicative word count for references is 500 words in total. Please expand the space below as necessary.

During his time with us Arthur offered invaluable training and support to students. The following examples demonstrate the ways in which he meets A1: Design and plan learning activities and/or programmes of study and A4: Develop effective learning environments and approaches to student support and guidance of the Dimensions of the UKPSF at D1.

Arthur's course development is an outstanding example of thoughtful pedagogy in action (A1). In developing his ideas he consulted not only a wide range of pedagogical literature (which he cites in this application) but also discussed his plans at length with a range of colleagues (K1, V3). Using this knowledge, Arthur designed a bespoke course to meet students' learning needs (K2, K3, V1, V2), delivered that course in an engaging way using appropriate learning technologies (K4), and used student evaluations of their experience to develop the provision that he offers (K5).

His success as a teacher is due in no small part to the respectful rapport that he develops with his students. He reflects self-consciously on ways of making students' experience both comfortable and stimulating. The course has been very popular over several years now. By creating a practical element to the course he enabled students to have tangible experiences that could be added to their CV and articulated in interviews (V4). He encouraged an open environment through his style of delivery, while on observation it was clear that even the quietest and under-engaged students were providing input, which is a testament to Arthur's ability to command a classroom (V1, V2).

Arthur acted upon feedback provided by students in a number of ways in order to improve the quality of the course even further (K5). Changing the environment of the last workshop made for better presentations from the students. Understanding that different working environments can positively impact the way in which students learn was something that Arthur used to his advantage (A4).

The evolution of the workshops over the course of the last year has been thanks to Arthur's recognition that his own CPD needs to be kept relevant and up to date in order to inform and coach the most inquisitive minds. By attending regular webinars and staying on top of developments in the sector he was able to adjust workshop plans accordingly so that they were current and reflected a rapidly changing sector (A5, V3).

Please indicate which Dimensions of the UKPSF are demonstrated in your supporting statement.

Areas of Activity					Core Knowledge						Professional Values			
A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	K1	K2	K3	K4	K5	K6	V1	V2	V3	V4
X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X