

FLAIR Pathway for Doctoral Researchers

Associate Fellowship (D1): Applicant Guidance



This document was produced in March 2024. It is aimed at applicants to the non-taught FLAIR CPD Scheme using the PSF 2023.

The Applicant Guidance Document is part of the overall Applicant Support Pack for D1. Other documents in this pack are accessible through the website: [Support for Applicants](#)

These guidance notes are for individuals wishing to make an application for D1 Associate Fellowship via the non-taught CPD scheme at the University of Reading. This document explores the requirements for Associate Fellowship and provides a number of guidance materials aimed at supporting you to develop your application.

The guidance provided in this document is based on Advance HE documentation, and adapted to reflect the processes and extra support provided by the University of Reading.

Although the information in this guide is accurate at the time of publication, aspects of the CPD Scheme and of practice within the Centre for Quality, Support and Development (CQSD) may be subject to modification and revision. The University reserves the right to modify the CPD Scheme in unforeseen circumstances or where the process of academic development and feedback from staff, quality assurance processes or external sources, such as professional bodies, requires a change to be made. In such circumstances, revised information will be issued. Information provided by CQSD in the course of the year should therefore be regarded, where appropriate, as superseding the information contained in this guide.

If you have any queries relating to this pathway, please contact Dr Pam Stuart
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FLAIR Framework

Fellowship can be awarded at three categories depending on the experience and impact of the applicant (Associate Fellow - D1, Fellow - D2, and Senior Fellow - D3). Though the categories might look hierarchical, they are not levels and are not sequential, and as such it is not necessary to have D1 to apply for D2. Instead, because the categories are linked to range and scope of impact, what they really represent is recognition of good practice tailored to different roles/career stages.

The FLAIR Framework has three routes to Fellowship:

- **FLAIR CPD Scheme:** This is a non-taught route for those who have been involved in learning and teaching in Higher Education for some time and who want to show their continuing commitment and impact. The Scheme supports colleagues to gain Fellowship at whichever category from D1-D3 is most appropriate for their experience
- **AFHEA Pathway for doctoral researchers:** This leads to D1 (Associate Fellowship) and is for PhD students who also have some responsibility for supporting teaching and learning
- **Academic Practice Programme (APP):** This is a taught programme which leads to D1 or D2 and is for colleagues new to teaching/supporting learning in HE

Strategic Alignment

As a university, we have a straightforward purpose: to foster communities of learning in which staff and students work together to develop knowledge, ideas, and skills that serve the needs of wider society. Excellence in teaching is central to such a purpose¹. This is reflected in the core principles at the heart of the Strategic Plan 2026.

Our FLAIR Framework is a key mechanism for delivering on this commitment. It is managed by the Academic Development and Enhancement team (ADE) within CQSD with the aim of providing a route for colleagues to gain professional recognition of Advance HE for their work in teaching and supporting learning.

The scheme contributes directly to three of the four strategic pillars identified in the University Strategic Plan 2020-2026. The scheme is designed to empower colleagues in a number of ways:

Principle 1: Community

- Become part of an active community, working collaboratively to develop and share good practice within the University.

Principle 2: Excellence

- Thoughtfully design and deliver effective teaching, underpinned by data and scholarship.
- Demonstrate that an enhanced student learning experience is at the heart of what you do

Principle 3: Impact beyond our campus

- Clearly articulate impact supported by evidence. The scheme itself provides international recognition of good practice

In the current context of Higher Education, teaching qualifications and recognitions have risen in importance. They are a symbol that the institution is driving good practice in relation to their learning experience, underpinned by robust and effective teaching and assessment strategies. Recognition of Fellowship also communicates an understanding of the need to evaluate practice and generate compelling impact. By taking part in any of the FLAIR Framework pathways you will also become part of a committed and reflective community of educators with the ability to continue that engagement beyond the application process.

¹ About Teaching and Learning: <https://www.reading.ac.uk/about/teaching-and-learning>

Fellowship is recognised by HESA² as a teaching qualification which means it has real value for individuals. In addition every Fellowship also contributes towards our institutional standing. Universities are required to report the percentage of staff with a teaching qualification to HESA.

Associate Fellowship

The category of Associate Fellowship enables individuals to be professionally recognised for their work across a wide variety of teaching and learning contexts within Higher Education. Successful applicants will be able to demonstrate evidence of good practice against some of the PSF dimensions at D1.

By applying to become an Associate Fellow you will have the opportunity to:

- Demonstrate your commitment to teaching, learning, and the student experience, through engagement in a practical process that encourages research, reflection and professional development
- Gain professional recognition for your higher education teaching and/or support for learning practice that is increasingly recognised by international institutions
- Benchmark your practice against professional standards and sector expectations
- Identify and celebrate your strengths and achievements through reflecting on your experience

Individuals applying for Associate Fellowship may be fairly new to a role in teaching and/or support for learning or may have a limited teaching portfolio; for example, some sessional/ part time staff or early career researchers with some teaching responsibilities. They may be new or experienced staff with specific roles in supporting HE learning such as technicians, librarians, professional staff, learning technologists, careers advisors, etc. It is not role dependent; you will need to explore whether you have sufficient evidence of appropriate teaching and or/support for learning practice to make a successful application.

We recommend that prior to starting your application you use Advance HE's free online [Fellowship Category Tool](#) (FCT)³. Answering the online questions about your higher education teaching and/or support for learning practice should:

- Help you to check that Associate Fellowship is the best match for your current practice
- Prompt your thinking about different aspects of your practice as you plan your application.

Eligibility for Associate Fellowship

The PSF 2023 sets out the professional standards for Higher Education (HE). All the experience and evidence included in an application for Associate Fellowship must relate to teaching and/or support for learning practice related to higher education provision.

As the FLAIR Framework is a University of Reading accredited scheme it is expected that the majority of your application will draw on examples demonstrating your impact at the University.

However, it may also be relevant to include examples from previous experience. If that experience was gained internationally it may be less clear as to what constitutes HE experience. Advance HE have established guidance on this as follows:

- level 4 or above within the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, or equivalent;

² <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/>

³ <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/form/fellowship-decision-tool-2023>

- level 7 or above within the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) in Scotland on the Framework for Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions (FQHEIS) or equivalent;
- level 5 or above of the European Qualifications Framework;
- first cycle or above of the Qualifications Framework in the European Higher Education Area (QFEHEA);
- level 5 or above of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) or equivalent;
- level 5 or above of the New Zealand Qualification Framework (NZQF) or equivalent;
- other equivalent higher education frameworks;
- activity focused on supporting learners within a Higher Education context, providing the learner(s) are enrolled on a Higher Education Qualification may also be considered as evidence equivalent to the higher education frameworks above;
- delivery of some non-accredited continuing professional development for academic and learning support staff may also be considered as evidence equivalent to the higher education frameworks.

The PSF 2023 acknowledges the wide variety of local and global contexts in which higher education operates, and the diverse practices and roles that contribute to high-quality learning. In defining what constitutes higher education teaching and learning within different national contexts in order to determine eligibility for fellowship, Advance HE uses UK ENIC (UK National Information Centre) for information about global education frameworks and qualifications. Programmes will be defined as HE for the purposes of staff teaching and supporting learning on the programme being eligible for fellowship if they are an integral part of a programme defined as higher education within the context of the country of study.

The definition of what constitutes higher education has been further defined for staff in UK and Australasia.

The Professional Standards Framework

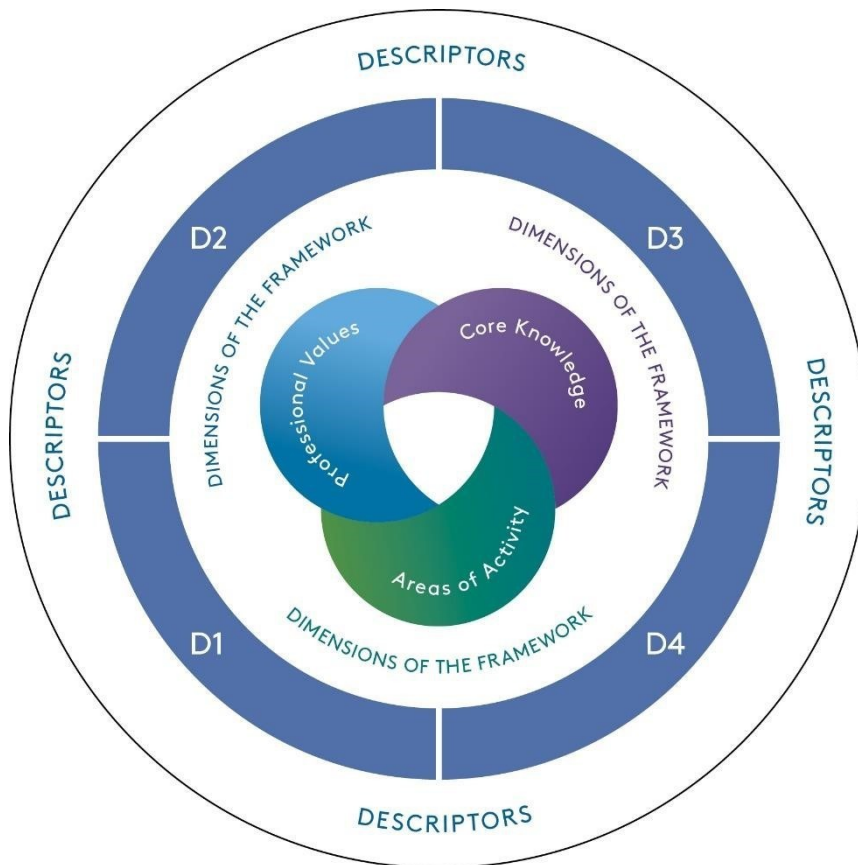
The Professional Standards Framework 2023 (PSF 2023) for teaching and supporting learning in higher education provides a comprehensive set of professional standards and guidelines for all those who are involved in teaching and supporting learning in higher education.

The PSF 2023 can be used by individuals to plan their development and evidence their practice to achieve professional recognition, by institutions as a basis for initial and continuing professional development and recognition programmes, and at a national level to improve teaching quality and celebrate success.

The PSF 2023 acknowledges the wide variety of local and global contexts in which higher education operates, and the diverse practices and roles that contribute to high-quality learning.

The Professional Standards Framework (PSF) 2023 consists of two components: Descriptors and Dimensions. The PSF Descriptors are a set of criteria statements (referred to as Descriptor 'criteria'). These define the key characteristics of four broad categories of practice. Incorporating the Dimensions, each Descriptor identifies the extent of practice required to meet it and recognises the variety of practice and roles undertaken by professionals who teach and/or support learning. Each Descriptor consists of an introduction and a set of three criteria statements.

Professional Standards Framework (PSF) 2023



The Dimensions of the Framework (PSF 2023) are arranged as three related sets of five Professional Values, five forms of Core Knowledge and five Areas of Activity.

- **Professional Values (V1-5):** underpin all forms of Core Knowledge and Areas of Activity. They are the foundation of professional practice.
- **Core Knowledge (K1-5):** informed by the Professional Values, representing key forms of knowledge required to undertake the Areas of Activity. There are multiple and diverse forms of knowledge which are connected to and shaped by communities and contexts.
- **Areas of Activity (A1-5):** bring together the Professional Values and forms of Core Knowledge, showing the essential activities that support delivery of effective practice.

The University of Reading is accredited by Advance HE to make awards at the following descriptors.

- Descriptor 1 (D1) aligns to Associate Fellow
- Descriptor 2 (D2) aligns to Fellow
- Descriptor 3 (D3) aligns to Senior Fellow

An individual providing teaching and/or support for learning can be recognised by Advance HE depending on their professional practice and experience at the appropriate category. This guidance document is focussed on Associate Fellowship (Descriptor 1).

To achieve Associate Fellowship, you need to evidence that your teaching and/or support of learning practice demonstrates the requirements of the three Descriptor 1 (D1) criteria. Effectiveness of practice in teaching and/or support of learning is demonstrated through evidence of:

- D1.1: use of appropriate Professional Values, including at least V1 and V3
- D1.2: application of appropriate Core Knowledge, including at least K1, K2 and K3
- D1.3: effective and inclusive practice in at least two of the five Areas of Activity

All Descriptor 1 criteria statements need to be aligned to the specified Dimensions of the PSF; shown below:

Professional Values

In your context, show how you:

- V1** respect individual learners and diverse groups of learners
- V2** promote engagement in learning and equity of opportunity for all to reach their potential
- V3** use scholarship, or research, or professional learning, or other evidence-informed approaches as a basis for effective practice
- V4** respond to the wider context in which higher education operates, recognising implications for practice
- V5** collaborate with others to enhance practice

Core Knowledge

In your context, apply knowledge of:

- K1** how learners learn, generally and within specific subjects
- K2** approaches to teaching and/or supporting learning, appropriate for subjects and level of study
- K3** critical evaluation as a basis for effective practice
- K4** appropriate use of digital and/or other technologies, and resources for learning
- K5** requirements for quality assurance and enhancement, and their implications for practice



Areas of Activity

In your context, demonstrate that you:

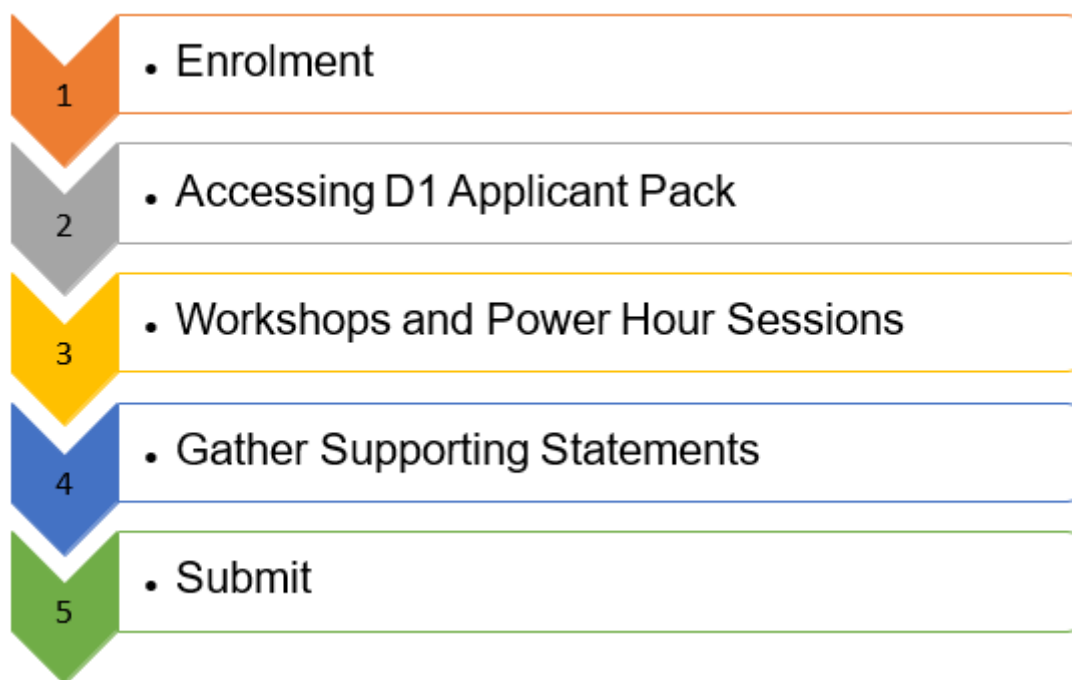
- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| A1 design and plan learning activities and/or programmes | A3 assess and give feedback for learning | A5 enhance practice through own continuing professional development |
| A2 teach and/or support learning through appropriate approaches and environments | A4 support and guide learners | |

Image taken from [Professional Standards Framework](#), Page 5⁴.

⁴ https://s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/assets.creode.advancehe-document-manager/documents/advancehe/PSF%202023%20-%20Screen%20Reader%20Compatible%20-%20final_1675089549.pdf

Developing your Application

Steps in developing your application:



Enrolment

You will need to begin by submitting an expression of interest to join the scheme by completing an enrolment form. Information on this is supplied by the Doctoral and Research College and if you meet the eligibility criteria you will be required to send the completed form to Dr Pam Stuart at the [Doctoral and Researcher College](#)⁵

DATE	ACTIVITY
20 January 2026	Launch of AFHEA Pathway for Doctoral Researchers by the Doctoral and Research College. Includes the invitation to apply to the Scheme.
06 March 2026	Deadline for submitting 'Expression of Interest' form to the Doctoral and Researcher College. (You will find the proforma on the website).
Week commencing 16 March 2026	Meeting between Doctoral and Researcher College and CQSD ADE to discuss applications.
27 March 2026	Deadline for Doctoral and Researcher College to have identified suitable participants and to have notified both successful/unsuccessful applicants.

All expressions of interest are considered at a selection panel. This is a competitive process with only a finite number of places available. The panel will select the submissions with the strongest chance of being able to meet the D1 criteria demonstrated through examples of good practice at the University of Reading. Not everyone who applies will be successful and being successful at the selection is no guarantee that fellowship will be awarded. The form will need to be signed by your supervisor and your Head of School or Department.

⁵ DoctoralandResearcherCollege@reading.ac.uk

All applicants are required to formally enrol on the Scheme. This enables us to ensure the eligibility of applicants before accepting them onto the scheme and also to monitor engagement. In addition we can only provide feedback to those who formally progress to enrol on the main scheme. The Doctoral and Research College together with CQSD ADE will assess how closely you meet the eligibility criteria, and whether the scheme is suitable for you.

Workshops

Once you are enrolled on the scheme, the next stage in the application process is to attend the first of three workshops that are specifically designed to support applicants on this pathway in developing their submissions. The dates can be found in the [Timeline of Events](#)⁶.

Being a doctoral researcher can often be alienating, and you may feel like you are experiencing things alone. In recognition of this we have designed the first seminar as an in person event, to be followed up with two online workshop for convenience. This is to help you meet your fellow colleagues, who you may wish to remain in contact with throughout the process and beyond. Attendance is compulsory and you will be booked onto this event automatically. Before the workshops you will receive joining information.

Each workshop is designed to focus on specific elements of the application.

EVENT	FOCUS
Workshop 1: in person	<p>Introduction to the PSF.</p> <p>Exploration of the application process.</p> <p>Early development of ideas to include in your contextual statement.</p> <p>Introduction to A5.</p>
Workshop 2: online	<p>Taught input focusing on Areas of Activity 1 & 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - opportunities for thinking (reflection on practice). - opportunities for talking (a forum for sharing best practice, asking questions and seeking guidance). - opportunities for reading (signposting relevant literature/scholarship to underpin your application). - opportunities for writing (brainstorming ideas and beginning your first draft in a supportive environment).
Workshop 3: online	<p>The workshop will follow a similar format to the second workshop but will focus on Areas of Activity 2 and 4.</p>

The workshops provide you with opportunities to reflect on your experience, practice and impact on learning in relation to each Area of Activity so that you can choose which are most appropriate for including in your application. During the time between each of the compulsory workshops you should be working on your application.

Power Hour Group Feedback Sessions

We are introducing group feedback sessions based on the Advance HE established power hour of writing. These are optional sessions intended to act as a way of accessing group tutor style support. They will run

⁶ <https://www.reading.ac.uk/cqsd/-/media/project/functions/cqsd/documents/timeline-of-events-from-launch-to-submission-2026.pdf>

at two points between the last workshop and the submission deadline. These will be open forums to ask questions and share experiences. This should help us address issues around the new PSF.

Dates can be found on the Key Dates document and calendar invitations will be sent to all applicants enrolled on the scheme.

Access the Associate Fellowship Applicant Pack

Once you have confirmed D1 as the appropriate category and completed the selection process you will need to access the applicant pack. You can find these materials on the Support For Applicants website page. Here you will find all key guidance material and sets of proforma's:

- Guide to the PSF 2023 Dimensions – Associate Fellowship
- Associate Fellowship Applicant Guidance (this document)
- Associate Fellowship Draft Application Template
- Supporting Statement Template (for use by your referee)
- Professional Standards Framework (PSF) 2023

Guide to the PSF 2023 Dimensions – Associate Fellowship (D1)

We recommend that you start by reading the 'Guide to the PSF 2023 Dimensions – Associate Fellowship (D1)'. This guide introduces and explains the PSF 2023 and then focuses on each of the 15 PSF 2023 Dimensions to support you in thinking about your practice and identifying potential evidence appropriate to PSF 2023 Descriptor 1 (D1), which is the basis for the award of Associate Fellowship.

This Guide focuses on each Dimension in great detail. We include lots of different examples of practice to reflect the wide range of roles and contexts in which HE practitioners work within the global higher education sector. There are also prompt questions to help you to think about your practice in relation to each Dimension. The questions and examples provided are indicative only and may not be relevant to your practice; you may have different appropriate examples, depending on your own unique context.

The starting point for your application will be to decide which two of the five Areas of Activity are most appropriate to your own practice. You will then be able to focus your use of the Guide on the sections most relevant to you and your context, to start to identify evidence to use in your application.

Associate Fellow applicant guidance

Once you have decided which two Areas of Activity you are going to base your application around, and you have identified how in your context you have used appropriate Professional Values (at least V1 and V3) and applied Core Knowledge (at least K1, K2 and K3) in your practice, you should then start to use this applicant guidance document to understand the format and requirements of the application as well as how to submit an application.

Associate Fellow Draft Application Template

Use this Word document template to write and finalise your draft application before submission.

Feedback and Support

Throughout the process you will have the opportunity to engage with an established support network through:

Group Tutoring Sessions: The CPD scheme manager will lead two Group tutoring sessions throughout the application process; the dates can be found on the timeline of events. These may be led by the CPD manager or a member of the Academic Development and Enhancement team (ADE) within the Centre for Quality Support and Development (CQSD). The sessions provide an opportunity to familiarise yourself with the PSF and the application process while also exposing you to colleagues going through the process at the same time. You will be able to seek advice on how to structure the most compelling

application possible, interpret the PSF and apply it to your context. To get the most out of your each session

- **Be focused:** The meeting will be more meaningful if you identify sections you want to concentrate on and/or come with specific questions.
- **Be prepared:** You will be provided with oral formative feedback aligned to the PSF and the assessment criteria. It is your responsibility to interpret and record any suggestions for revising the draft. Please be prepared to make notes during the meeting.
- **Format:** Meetings are primarily held online but can be face to face where possible
- **Preparation:** There will be an opportunity to share specific sections of your drafts with ADE. The session will also include breakouts where you can discuss aspects of the process with your cohort.

It should be emphasised that applying for Fellowship is about demonstrating your own understanding of the Dimensions and Descriptors of the PSF through an application you have written independently. During the feedback process, you should not expect feedback on the mapping to the PSF as this risks the application becoming a reflection of someone else's understanding. Whoever leads the session will be happy to offer feedback and answer questions/make recommendations but it is not their responsibility to shape the contents/ structure. Crucially they cannot confirm the readiness of an application or the likely outcome.

Whilst it is not compulsory to take feedback, we would strongly recommend taking advantage of these opportunities. Experience tells us that engaged applicants are more likely to submit high quality applications. **Please note, we have a strict no inbox policy and cannot give feedback via email.**

Your Written Account of Professional Practice

There are two parts to your application for Associate Fellowship:

1. Written Account of Professional Practice
 - a) Context Statement.
 - b) Reflective Narrative against two PSF Areas of Activity.
2. One Supporting Statement.

Associate Fellowship is based on meeting Descriptor 1 (D1) of the PSF and your Written Account of Professional Practice is the core of your application. This consists of a Context Statement and a Reflective Narrative written against two areas of activity.

Your Context Statement provides a brief summary of your higher education roles, responsibilities and professional experience and your Reflective Narrative should provide evidence that your professional practice meets the requirements of PSF 2023 Descriptor 1. Higher education takes many forms and there is considerable variation in the different roles higher educational professionals carry out; for example, in experience, disciplinary background, job role, institutional context, etc. Your Account of Professional Practice is a personal account and its focus throughout should be on your own professional practice; make it personal to your specific, individual and distinctive practice. Your Supporting Statement will verify and endorse that what you write about in your Account of Professional Practice represents your practice in a genuine way.

The award of Associate Fellowship is based on evidence of your effective and inclusive practice; you might briefly mention future plans as part of identifying what has worked well and any changes you plan to make in future, however, your application will be judged on whether your evidence of current and recent practice meets the requirements of Descriptor 1.

In your Reflective Narrative you should include appropriate rationale for the approaches you took and evidence the success and effectiveness of your teaching and/or supporting learning practice. Your

Reflective Narrative should be based around real examples from your practice and should make clear what you did, why/how you did it that way and how you know that this was effective. Writing about the 'why you did it that way' will enable you to provide evidence for V3: use scholarship, or research, or professional learning, or other evidence-informed approaches as a basis for effective practice.

Provide selective examples of practice in your Reflective Narrative and ensure they have direct relevance to your claim for Associate Fellowship. The quality of the examples of evidence is much more important than the quantity. Examples should be drawn from current and recent practice (within the last 3 years) and must relate to higher education teaching and/or supporting learning. If you need to refer back to practice from more than 3 years ago, you need to ensure that you focus on how this now influences your current practice

Supporting Statement: You will need to provide a supporting statement from a colleague in a position to corroborate your examples of good practice.

Emphasise Your Agency

Think of your application as a 'claim' that your work is effective and has a positive impact on high quality learning. Your review panel consists of two experienced peer reviewers and you need to show these reviewers the specific nature and impact of your role within each example. They will be looking to see if there is a clear rationale behind the way you work, the choices you make in your practice, and the effect that your input has generated.

Write in first person (use 'I') so it is clear what you do/have done. Avoid discussing teaching in general or abstract terms, as this moves the application away from being about you and your own personal practice. This will not help your personal 'claim' against Descriptor 1. Where you include work that you did as part of a team/with colleagues/ others (V5), you need to be clear what your personal contribution was. It is necessary to collaborate but collaboration is an active experience. There is a difference between being present and adding value, and it is this difference which you will need to make clear to the review panel.

One of the things many people find challenging when writing their application is writing in the first person. They feel that focusing on themselves in this way looks like blowing their own trumpet and that feels uncomfortable. Although this is understandable, Fellowship applications are a place where you have to try to put modesty aside. It's essential you focus on your individual achievements and impact. It isn't arrogance to share the good work you've been doing and be rewarded for the impact you've had through your own good practice.

Contextual Statement

A Contextual Statement is the first part of your Written Account of Professional Practice and you should briefly introduce yourself and outline your role(s) and responsibilities in teaching and/or supporting learning in higher education. The information in your Context Statement will help the reviewers to understand the nature of your work and the context in which you practice. It is the golden thread that links all your activities together; bringing all your examples together in to a logical and compelling whole. The Contextual Statement is not assessed, but without it the examples of good practice provided in the Reflective narrative might seem disparate and lacking context.

In no more than 300 words your Context Statement should:

- Not be descriptive. Context is only appropriate if it is relevant to the way you enhance the student experience detailed in your chosen examples
- Provide a brief summary of your teaching and/or support of learning experience. This should include the context in which you currently work, your current role and T&L responsibilities.

- Identify the type and location of the institution(s) you work for, as this will help to set out the context for your work. Keep this brief and relevant to your role. Do not include details about the history and prestige of the institution(s). Your Account of Professional Practice is about you and your practice
- Identify the learners that you work with; for example, the level of study (e.g. year of study, undergraduate, postgraduate, etc.), programme(s)/unit(s) of study, discipline/specialist area of work, number and types of learners, etc
- Focus on your current or recent practice, which should be within the last 3 years.

Please remember that your application for Associate Fellowship is based on your higher education practice; if you also work in other teaching or learning roles outside of higher education you should not include this in your application (please refer to Section x for further information about eligibility for Associate Fellowship).

As the Context Statement is not an assessed part of your application, you do not need to link this information to the PSF. Any examples of practice should be included in the appropriate sections; the contextual statement is reserved for an overarching summary of your approach. Remember, the review panel do not know you, or the finer details of your subject, and any information you provide here needs to directly contribute to their understanding of the examples you provide later.

The two examples below illustrate the types of information that are useful to include in the Context Statement to set the background to your practice:

Example 1: I am a PhD student in my third year at a research-intensive university. I have been involved in various teaching and support of learning activities over the last two years. I lead seminars for groups of between 10-15 undergraduate students studying Spanish in years 1 and 2. Seminar topics cover Spanish culture, history and politics. These normally last between one and two hours and provide the opportunity to discuss particular topics in more detail. Although the seminar schedule and topics are set, I develop my own seminar materials with support from the academic team. I use the University's VLE platform to host resources and activities. I also teach the module Mandarin for Beginners, which is offered to all second year undergraduate language students; this involves a weekly lecture to around 40 undergraduate students and four tutorials a week to groups of 4-5 students.

Example 2: I am an experienced, professionally qualified librarian at the University of X with specific responsibility for supporting students in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, whilst also helping to deliver the library's academic skills agenda. I have worked at the University for three years and am part of a small team of four library staff within the faculty. The University is a large modern university with four faculties and around 20,000 Undergraduate and 8,000 Postgraduate students. My faculty attracts a high proportion of international second-language students. My main teaching is face-to-face in-class timetabled sessions with groups of 20- 30 first year undergraduate students in their first semester. I work closely with academic staff and design my sessions to fit alongside their programme objectives. My sessions are usually up to 1.5 hours in length. I also design and deliver face to face self-sign-up sessions with small groups of undergraduate and postgraduate students at our main site and students in our two overseas campuses via video link. I am currently involved in a university-wide project to identify correlation between skills workshop attendance and attainment, especially for traditionally underperforming groups.

Structuring your Reflective Narrative

The written Reflective Narrative is structured into two sections; you write about your practice in relation to two of the five PSF Areas of Activity. You should choose to write about the two Areas of Activity that are most appropriate to your own practice (see Section 5 below for further guidance). Applicants should as a guide include two examples in each Area of Activity. The quality of the examples of evidence is much more important than the quantity.

As well as covering two Areas of Activity (D1.3), to address D1.1 and D1.2 you also need to make sure that across the two sections of the Reflective Narrative you include evidence that you are effectively using appropriate Professional Values at least V1 and V3; and applying appropriate Core Knowledge at least K1, K2 and K3.

In addition to the mandatory Dimensions required for Descriptor 1, you are likely to also identify other Professional Values that you used and other forms of Core Knowledge that you applied within the examples of practice you are writing about. Where this is the case then make clear why and how you used/ applied these. Please remember to continue to use the Guide to

Understanding the PSF 2023 Dimensions – Associate Fellowship to support you in making links between your practice and the most relevant Dimensions and to choose evidence to include as you develop your narrative. As you provide evidence against the Dimensions, you should highlight this where applicable. One way to do this is to refer to the Dimension in your text, e.g. (V1) or (K1) etc. Ensure that you only link to the most relevant Dimensions in each case (eg one or two that you have engaged with in a meaningful way in that specific example of practice).

Reflective Narrative Word Limit

The overall word limit for the Associate Fellow Reflective Narrative is 1,400 plus context statement (300 words) and citations (200 words). We ask that you indicate the amount of words used in each section.

Reflect on Your Practice

Developing your Reflective Narrative requires you to identify/gather and consider evidence of your practice, reflecting on the impact you have made on student learning. You should avoid long descriptions of what you 'did' and take a reflective stance so that it is clear what you did, how/why you did it that way, how you know this was effective and what you will do in future as a result. A simple reflective model for you to use throughout your Reflective Narrative could be to clearly explain:

- **What** you did (be selective with the examples you choose to include).
- **Why** you did it in this way; clearly explain your approach and justify your choices and decisions (eg use of an appropriate evidence-informed approach to suit your context, etc.).
- **How** you carried out this approach (eg including any specific challenges or practical issues you had to overcome).
- How you **evaluated the effectiveness** of what you did (explain the kinds of 'information' you used to review and evaluate your work including the impact this had on your learners' learning)
Associate Fellowship applicant guidance.
- What was the **impact**? What changes did you make as a result of evaluating your effectiveness (for example, you might have modified a session in response to learner/ peer feedback and then evaluated the effectiveness of the change you implemented).

Reference list

Throughout your Reflective Narrative you will refer to the sources of information that you have drawn on within your teaching and/or support for learning practice. For example, K2 requires that you bring to your practice a knowledge base of approaches to teaching and/or supporting learning, appropriate to your context. In evidencing K2, you might explain why you chose an approach and how you came to know about it (e.g. journal article, professional development, conference, mentoring from colleagues, etc.). Where you do refer to a source of information that has influenced your practice, you should 'cite' the reference within your text to provide appropriate credit to the author(s)/organisation. This will enable those reviewing your application to be clear about which sources have influenced and inspired your practice. Whenever you cite in the text, you need to include the full reference in a list at the end of your Reflective Narrative. Footnotes are not accepted. The short excerpt of an Associate Fellowship application below illustrates how the applicant cites the journal article that inspired their design of a lecture and includes the full reference in their Reference List:

'When it came to designing my seminar sessions, I was influenced by Burgstahler's (2015) theory of universal design. I thought about the diverse nature of learners in my group and the cultures and educational backgrounds they came from, to ensure that the activities I chose reflected their identities, interests and needs. (V1)'

Reference List for excerpt: Burgstahler, S. (2015). Equal access: Universal design of instruction. A checklist for inclusive teaching. Seattle: DO-IT, University of Washington. Available at http://www.washington.edu/doi/Brochures/Academics/equal_access_udi.html (accessed 14/02/23)

Evidencing the required PSF Dimensions for Descriptor 1

Deciding which two Areas of Activity to base your Reflective Narrative around is an important first stage in planning and developing your application. You should use the 'Guide to the PSF 2023 Dimensions – Associate Fellowship (D1)' to support you to select the two Areas of Activity in one of the following ways:

- consider the guidance and prompt questions for all five Areas of Activity and then make a choice when you have mapped out your likely evidence against each one. You will then be able to decide which two Areas of Activity will make the strongest claim against Descriptor 1; or
- alternatively, it may be very clear to you immediately that your evidence is associated with two specific Areas of Activity because of your context and the nature of your practice; in which case focus your attention on the relevant sections in the guide. Although the Reflective Narrative for Associate Fellow applications is structured around two of the five Areas of Activity this does not mean that the Areas of Activity are more important than the Professional Values or Core Knowledge PSF 2023 Dimensions.

As well as using the 'Guide to the PSF Dimensions' to identify your two Areas of Activity, you should also use the guide to identify where you use Professional Values and apply Core Knowledge within your practice. For each selected area of activity you need to ensure that your evidence includes use of appropriate Professional Values at least V1 and V3, and application of Core Knowledge at least K1, K2 and K3. Most activities cover multiple dimensions and you will probably have evidence that your practice includes dimensions additional to minimum requirement. This is expected, and you can reference these where they are most relevant. The Dimensions are inter-dependent and integrated within the context of your professional practice; put simply, the Areas of Activity are what you do, you use the Professional Values to inform and underpin your work and the Core Knowledge is what you need to apply to effectively carry out this work.

A short example is given below to illustrate how this might happen in your work:

In designing and planning a learning activity (A1) I apply my knowledge of how my learners learn within this subject (K1) and select an appropriate teaching and learning approach (K2). I consider the needs of individuals within my learner group (V1) and plan appropriately to ensure that all learners will be able to fully engage (V2). I develop appropriate resources to use and set up an online quiz to assess the learning that has taken place in this session (K4, A3).

Examples of practice for each Area of Activity

The 'Guide to the PSF 2023 Dimensions' is your key source of information about what evidence of your effective and inclusive practice (D1.3) you might include in your application for Associate Fellowship. The short examples below are included to help you to understand how in an application the planning of evidence around the two Areas of Activity also incorporates use of Professional Values and application of Core Knowledge.

An example to support thinking about A1

Workshops: Hassan recently ran a short series of study skills workshops for first year undergraduate students and decided to use this as one of his examples of evidence towards A1. Hassan firstly explains how he used his knowledge of study skills in the design and planning of the workshops (K1). He discusses the particular needs of his first year group of undergraduate students and how he considered the diversity of their previous learning experiences and individual learning needs in planning his approach (V1, K2). He outlines the challenges that other tutors have previously encountered in delivering these workshops and discusses how he plans to overcome some of these challenges. He then explains why he felt this was the best approach to take with this group. Hassan explains how he designed the learning activities to link with the students' particular discipline (K2), drawing on two articles he read which included research on learning in this field (V3). Hassan evaluated the sessions by getting the students to give feedback after the final session. He then reflects on what worked well and what didn't, what he learned from the experience and how he plans to change aspects of next year's workshop series as a result (K3).

An example to support thinking about A2

Demonstrating in a practical laboratory session Mia, an early-career researcher, has been demonstrating chemical analysis techniques to a group of second year undergraduate students and supporting them to use these techniques in a series of practical laboratory sessions. Mia uses this as part of her evidence towards A2. Mia knows that second year students find the theoretical knowledge around her subject challenging and understands how useful practical experiments are in supporting them to develop a greater understanding of the subject. She discusses how she used her discipline knowledge (aligning with her research area in this particular case) which underpins the experiment (K2) and refers to relevant pedagogic literature on how learners develop practical skills in her discipline (V3, K1). As this practical lab series is far more advanced than basic first year lab sessions, Mia discusses how she breaks down the practical sessions into clear stages so that she can support students' engagement and their understanding of the experiment as she works with them, adapting her guidance accordingly (K2). Mia has considered the diversity of the learning group and discusses how she ensures that all students can participate fully. Some students are mature, some came directly to university at 18, a number of students are from other countries and some of these have difficulties understanding some of the complex language of the discipline.

One student has a hearing impairment (V1). Mia provides notes that are available to all students via the VLE about the experiment in advance of the session; these are particularly useful for the students who are working in a second language and the student with a hearing impairment (V2). Mia knows that providing material in advance is important for a variety of students because she attended a CPD workshop on inclusivity, which she found both interesting and useful. As a result of attending this workshop Mia is exploring ways that she can further adapt her teaching practice to ensure that all students are able to engage fully (V2 and V3).

An example to support thinking about A3

Assessing students in a blended learning context Anton is a post-doctoral researcher with some teaching responsibilities. He is supporting a group of students on a module that is part of a blended learning programme in Art and Design. One of the key aspects of his role is assessing students' work, particularly formatively, and providing feedback to help them prepare for their summative assessment which ends with a 'show'. Most of the study on the programme is online, with students attending campus for a one block of learning on a termly basis. Anton uses this as part of his evidence towards A3. Anton sets the context for his assessment practice and explains the approach he takes to providing formative feedback on the students' work, relating this to the requirements of the module and the end of year summative 'show' (K2).

In doing this, he refers to pedagogic literature he has read on assessment and providing appropriate feedback (V3). He discusses the importance of his work in providing timely and supportive formative feedback to enable students to develop their work prior to the final summative assessment. Anton explains how he works with the challenges and advantages of an online environment to provide his

students with appropriate support and guidance (K2, K4). He refers to an interesting article he read about online feedback and explains how this has influenced the way that he now works with students at a distance (V3). This flexible approach to study has attracted some part-time mature students and Anton provides some specific examples of how he has supported the needs of part-time mature students, newly back into study (V1).

Anton then discusses his role in the summative assessment at the end of year show and the way in which he works as part of a team to make assessment judgements on the students' work (V5). He has taken part in a team development workshop for all tutors on this programme; he identifies what he learned at this session and explains how he now applies this learning when doing the summative assessment at the end of year show (A5). He also discusses some things he intends to do differently next year, based on student progress and mid-module feedback, and why he thinks these changes will enhance learning on the programme (K3).

An example to support thinking about A4

Work-place mentoring Chen is in a professional role in a clinical setting but is also employed by a university to provide mentoring for undergraduate students in practice. She decides to choose A4 as one of her two Areas of Activity for her application, focussing on her support for a small number of students in a placement setting to translate the learning from their coursework into practice with clients/patients. Chen discusses her role in mentoring students. She refers to literature on evidence-based practice that underpins both her own clinical work and the students' work-based learning (V3). She also discusses the training for mentors she attends at the university and explains how she is using some of the examples from those training sessions (V3, A5) to help her provide guidance for some final year students in the clinical setting. Chen discusses the guidance she has created and how this has helped students to apply the learning from their coursework and timely support to prepare for their placement (V2).

Chen demonstrates her understanding of the learning outcomes students are required to fulfil to pass this particular placement (K1) and explains how she and other placement mentors have worked with the module tutor at the university to align the academic elements with the practice context (V5). She provides examples of the kinds of prompt questions she uses with the students to help them think critically about their clinical practice (K1, K2). Chen also encourages students to take histories from patients and then present these so that she can give them some verbal feedback on how they could improve on this and make it more effective (A3). Chen also considers the particular learning needs of this group of students in comparison to first year students she has mentored in a different setting previously (K1). She discusses the relevance of this particular experience to the students' future employability and how she ensures that they are clear about how the Professional Body requirements apply to their work in this clinical context (V4).

An example to support thinking about A5

Part-time tutor industry/programme team Alex is a part time tutor on a postgraduate programme in Film Production. She also works within the industry. She discusses the impact of both her (i) industry-related and (ii) teaching-related professional development on the learning experience she provides for her students.

Industry-related example: Alex discusses how her continuing professional development in industry supports her role as a tutor on the programme; she remains up to date with current trends in equipment and software through reading professional journals, attending professional development events and working with other professionals. As well as being expert on her own specialist area, Alex explains how her work on film sets across the world enables her to collaborate with other professionals and how she uses the knowledge and insight gained to help her teach from a wider industry-based perspective (K2, V3). She discusses how this impacts on her students' learning experience and their readiness to work in the global industry (V4).

Teaching-related example: Alex discusses her commitment to teaching and learning-related continuing professional development. All members of the programme team actively engage in peer-review of

teaching and Alex provides several examples of how observing her colleagues and being observed by experienced peers has influenced her approach to her own teaching practice (V3). As a result of these experiences, she has also started to read more about how students learn in her discipline and is drawing on this new knowledge in her teaching practice (K1, K2). The programme team hold regular meetings and Alex explains how these help her to understand where her sessions fit into the rest of the module and programme (K1). Alex explains what she has learnt about the effectiveness of different methods of teaching from her colleagues' discussions at the meetings. Together with feedback provided by the student representatives who attend the meetings, and the responses from her module evaluations, Alex has changed some approaches to her teaching and learning practice to enhance some elements of the module (K3).

The examples above will have helped to illustrate how someone might write about their practice in a Reflective Narrative. You will be writing about your own unique context and using examples and evidence personal to you. Supporting Statement

Remember to write in first person – use 'I': I attended a University workshop about neurodiversity in order to better understand the challenges that one of my students faces (V1). I later read an article recommended by the workshop facilitator that was highly relevant to my disciplinary context (V3). I now approach the planning of my session activities and the learning environment to ensure that all my students can fully engage in the learning to reach their full potential (A1, V2)

Supporting Statement

Your application for Associate Fellowship must be endorsed by a Supporting Statement from a referee. The Supporting Statement endorses your claim and is used by the reviewers to confirm that your application presents a fair and accurate reflection of your higher education practice. It is not used by reviewers to fill any gaps in the evidence you provide towards the Descriptor.

Your referee should work, or have recently worked, closely with you and have first-hand knowledge of your practice so that they are in a position to comment on and endorse your application. Your supporting statement should reflect a professional relationship; i.e. not be from a family member or based on a personal/professional friendship, and be in a position to meaningfully validate the claim.

It is important that you read the Supporting Statement your referee provides, as they may refer to aspects of your practice that could strengthen your application; if this is the case then you could revise parts of your application and ask your referee to check that they are happy to endorse the changes you have made before you submit. You may be asked to provide an alternative Supporting Statement for a variety of reasons when reviewers of your application judge that the statement does not fully verify and endorse the evidence in your application.

Guidance for Referees

It is your responsibility to provide your referee with a copy of the Supporting Statement template. This document can be found in the Applicant Support pack. The Supporting Statement must be written in the template provided. In the Supporting Statement, your referee will need to confirm that you have represented your practice accurately and fairly. Therefore, you will need to provide them with the final draft of your application to inform their statement. The referee will need to confirm that in their professional opinion, you demonstrate the requirements of Descriptor 1 and should be awarded Associate Fellowship. Your referee will be asked to confirm that they have written the Supporting Statement themselves and that the information they provide has been written specifically for your application. The statement needs to be submitted as a pdf and sent to you to upload with your application.

We reserve the right to contact your referee for clarification so please ensure that the Supporting Statement includes verifiable contact details (eg name, job title, email address, institution). If the integrity of the Statement is in question, or does not broadly corroborate the evidence in the application it will not be accepted. This may result in the application being failed.

Submitting your Associate Fellowship Application

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure the application is complete. This page lists important information on preparing your application for submission to ensure it is processed without any difficulties.

Preparing your application for submission

To prepare your application for submission you should:

- **Complete the Application Form.** You will find the template in the Applicant Support Pack and linked to from the AFHEA pathway webpage. Please note: all applicants are required to sign off the declarations embedded within the form (eligibility statement; statement of original authorship). No application can be processed without a signature
- **Format.** The Application should be formatted as follows:
 - o Font: Arial 11 point
 - o Line spacing: 1.5
 - o Page numbers should be indicated within the footer
- **Save** the completed file as a single PDF
- **Send** the PDF to the [Doctoral and Researcher College](#)⁷

Please ensure that your application adheres to confidentiality guidelines. It is your responsibility to remove the names of any individuals you refer to in the application, or notify and obtain permission.

Submission Points

There is one annual submission point for the AFHEA Pathway for Doctoral Researchers.

ACTIVITY	DATE
Deadline	By 4pm (BST) Thursday 10th September 2026 you should have sent your application as a PDF to the Doctoral and Researcher College.
Review Panels	Your application will reviewed by an experienced Recognition Panel and your result will be communicated to you by email no later than 4pm (GMT) Friday 20th November 2026.

Applications must be received by 4pm at the very latest on the day submissions close. We cannot accept late applications. In exceptional circumstances it may be possible to negotiate an extension. If you feel there is any danger of not being able to submit by the deadline, you must notify the Doctoral and Research College to discuss if an extension can be arranged.

In order to engage with the scheme and for your application to be processed, you must be current and active (i.e. enrolled as a doctoral researcher). If you suspend your studies during the timeframe of applying, then you must withdraw from the scheme. You could consider submitting an Expression of Interest for the next round (if relevant) but, as this is a competitive process, we cannot offer any guarantee of being accepted.

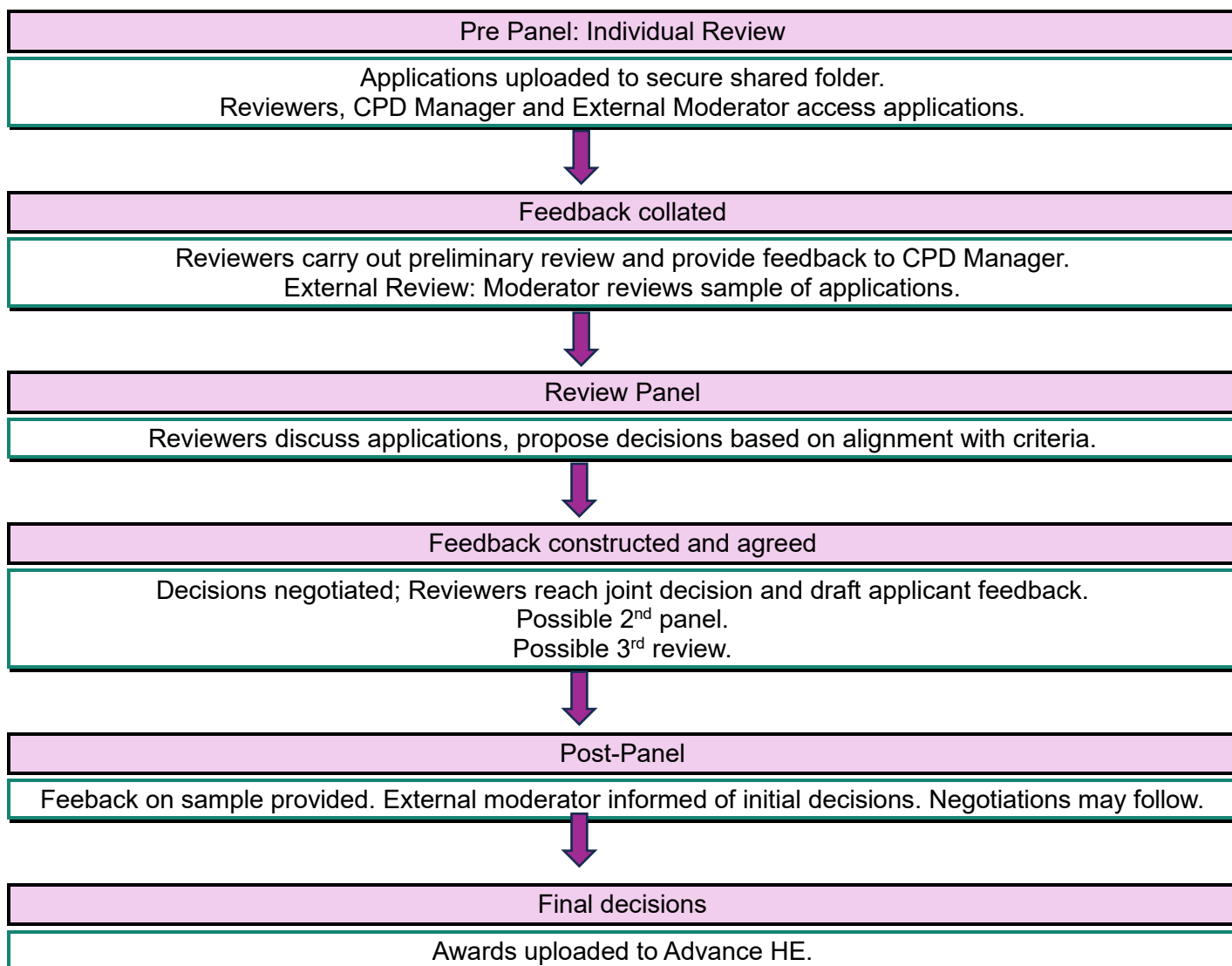
⁷ DoctoralandResearcherCollege@reading.ac.uk

The Assessment Process

Each D1 application is assessed by two reviewers from our 'College of Reviewers'. We refer to each pair of reviewers as the panel. All those who review applications are trained for the category of Fellowship being reviewed and must sit on at least two panels each year to maintain their status as reviewers.

What Happens After I Apply?

The Manager of the FLAIR CPD scheme attends every panel in an advisory capacity to provide advice on the process or on the PSF and its interpretation. The Manager of the FLAIR CPD scheme can act as a reviewer where there is no conflict of interest (i.e. has not given feedback on the final draft of an applicant's submission).



The panel look for evidence that your practice meets the Descriptor 1 requirements across your application. They will also check that the Supporting Statement provides appropriate endorsement for your application. Each review is completed individually before being shared and discussed at the panel. Initial judgements are agreed and a sample are negotiated with the external moderator.

Outcomes:

Once the panel have agreed a decision there are two possible outcomes:

Award: Successful applicants

- Applicant informed of decision by email. The timeframe and specific date is published in the timeline of events.
- Decisions uploaded to Advance HE website.
- Applicant contacted by Advance HE via automated email with invitation to create a 'My Academy' account and information for downloading certificate

Refer:

- Applicant informed of decision.
- Written feedback provided with guidance/timeframe for revisions.
- Further support offered (one 1-2-1 meeting, one feedback appointment)
- Revised application resubmitted (within 6 weeks of date of referral) and reviewed by original reviewers. An additional 200 words is allowed for resubmissions making an overall maximum of 1600 words.

Resubmission: If reviewers do not feel that it is appropriate to recommend AFHEA, the application will be referred for reconsideration at a future panel. Detailed feedback will be provided to support the resubmission. An additional 200 words is allowed for D1 resubmissions making an overall word count of 1600 words. Resubmissions must be received within 6 weeks of the date of referral (if the 6-week point falls on a University closure day, the deadline is adjusted to three working days after the closure). Only one resubmission is allowed.

If unsuccessful at the second attempt (or the resubmission is not received within 6 weeks), you will need to start the process anew by submitting an Expression of Interest for the next round. This is a competitive process and we cannot offer any guarantee of being accepted.

Confirmation: Finally we upload the award to the Advance HE website. When we do this we are required to confirm that you are an employee of the University of Reading at the point of award. Advance HE charges a fee for Fellowship to individuals who are not employed by a subscribing institution. Being at UoR at the point of award is a stipulation for enrolment in the scheme. In the unlikely instance that you are no longer employed by a subscribing institution, then you will be required to pay.

Details of the tariffs for different tiers of Fellowship can be found on the Advance HE website: <https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/recognition-accreditation/hea-fellowships>.

Please note: The application proforma contains a declaration that you consent to relevant personal data (name, email address, date enrolled on the FLAIR CPD Scheme) being shared with Advance HE for the purpose of registering your Fellowship award.

How long will the process take?

Decisions are returned in the autumn term, the date can be found in the timeline of events found on the website <https://www.reading.ac.uk/cqsd/flair/afhea-pathway-for-doctoral-researchersresources>.

We are occasionally able to release decisions earlier than this. We work hard to do so but this is dependent on the complexity of individual cases. Applications are reviewed individually, then as a panel and a selection are moderated. Occasionally there is a need for a third review before a decision can be reached and each reviewer is provided a minimum of two weeks to read the application and provide detailed feedback, book and attend panels, and finalise the final feedback document.

We take pride in ensuring that feedback is provided to both successful and referred applicants. This is not something that is standard practice but we feel it integral to our efforts to build an engaged and reflective community of colleagues. We release all decisions as a batch so it is no cause for concern if your decision is released on the final day.

Contact Us

If you have further questions or require further assistance, in the first instance please see our Webpage.

Tips

1. **Make a strong claim:** Think of your application as making a claim that you deserve to be awarded Fellowship (a claim that your work has had substantial impact on student learning/outcomes/the student experience, and that your practice meets the requirements for D1). Just because you have been involved in something doesn't count as evidence of deep understanding and true engagement. The claims need to be explicit as the reviewers cannot make any assumptions. It is up to you to make the claim.
2. **Articulate why you work as you do:** The reviewers need to see that there is a clear rationale behind the way you work and the choices you make. Make sure that the aims/vision/philosophy behind your work are explicit and clear.
3. **Give tangible examples:** Common comments made by reviewers are 'Where are the tangible examples?' and 'Anyone can say that'. Although it is inevitable that some of your writing will describe your work in general terms, it is essential that you give enough concrete examples for the reviewers to get a clear picture of what you actually do and include anecdotes on how you have worked with particular students. And remember, the quality of the examples is much more important than the quantity.
4. **Currency and Sufficiency:** Fellowship can only be awarded on the basis of current practice (at D1 this is usually the last 1-3 years). If any aspects of your work from before this timeframe are still having impact (in other words there is still an element of current value and relevance), then you can include them as long as you draw out clearly how this is still currently having impact on your own or others' professional practice and/or on the wider learning and teaching context. If you have recently taken on a new role, you will not yet have sufficient evidence of impact in the role. Keep this up your sleeve for any future application.
5. **Be present in your application:** Fellowship applications should be personal accounts of practice. Make sure it doesn't read like something that someone else could have written about you. It must embody "you" and give the reviewers a clear picture of 'the person behind the application'. Some applicants feel uncomfortable using 'I', 'me', 'my'. However, it is essential that you do this rather than using 'we'.
6. **The reflective practitioner:** Avoid simple description or lists. The reviewers are looking for evidence of a reflective approach to practice. Some applicants worry this means they need to apply specific reflective approaches. However, you simply need to show that you are critical and ask questions about your practice and about student outcomes/engagement in order to develop and improve the learning experience. Throughout your application, the quality of reflection on and of your professional practice should be the focus of your narrative, rather than description.

Reflective Prompts

Things you might include/reflect on in your application:

COMPONENT	EXAMPLE
Developing quality enhancement	Think about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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. - ways you have fostered dynamic approaches to learning and teaching through creativity and innovation.
Supporting other colleagues	Think about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - how you have supported other colleagues to enhance their T&L practices. - how you have enhanced academic practice through coordinating/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	Think about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - staff development activities you have engaged in that enhance your ability to meet the dimensions of the PSF. - how your contributions have promoted the student learning experience.
Evaluation of academic practice	Think about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - steps you have taken to reflect on and develop your practice. - how you support, encourage and implement evaluation processes designed to enhance the student learning experience..

Appendices

Appendix 1: Remaining in good standing

It is implicit within the PSF, and required by [Advance HE](#)⁸, that all Fellows remain in good standing. It is the responsibility of individuals to ensure they remain in good standing and continue to work in line with their relevant Fellow descriptor standard. We expect Fellows to be working towards their next award and be performing, or out-performing, their current Fellow descriptor standard. All Fellows should, therefore, be able to demonstrate compliance with (at least) their awarded level at any given time.

Embedded within the FLAIR CPD scheme is the principle of reciprocity - an expectation of giving back something back after completion in order to 'remain in good standing'. More on this can be found by visiting the [Doctoral and Researcher College](#) resources.

Appendix 2: Quality Assurance

4a) Internal Quality Assurance processes

The FLAIR Review and Enhancement Group oversees the FLAIR Framework. Membership of the group includes:

- Senior colleague responsible for FLAIR (currently Professor Elizabeth McCrum, PFHEA).
- T&L Dean with responsibility for FLAIR.

⁸ <https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/downloads/Fellowship%20Code%20of%20Practice.pdf>

- External Moderator (SFHEA).
- Representation from ADE:
 - o Head of ADE (SFHEA).
 - o Manager of FLAIR CPD Scheme (SFHEA).
 - o Programme Director for the APP (SFHEA).
- Heads of School/SDTLs for school-facing perspective (minimum FHEA).
- A representative from professional services (minimum FHEA).
- Recent alumni of CPD Scheme for 'student' perspective.
- Recent alumni from the Academic Practice Programme.

The group normally meets annually. However, the Chair of the group may convene additional meetings if necessary. The FLAIR Review and Enhancement Group reviews the previous year's progress and discusses the External Moderator's report and future development and enhancement of the scheme for the coming year.

Reports on the FLAIR CPD scheme are provided as required to relevant institutional committees and groups as an additional mechanism for internal quality assurance.

4b) Externality

Quality assurance of the FLAIR CPD scheme also includes the involvement of an external moderator. The moderator is Professor Sabrina Poma SFHEA of Kings College London.

The primary role of the External Moderator is:

- to assist us in ensuring that the standards set for the FLAIR CPD Scheme are appropriately aligned to the PSF and comparable to the standard of work submitted to schemes at other institutions and direct applications to Advance HE.
- to assist us in ensuring that our recognition panels are conducted properly and appropriately.
- to assist us in enhancing the quality of the FLAIR CPD scheme by advising on good practice identified within the Scheme and beyond.

The external moderator quality assures processes and judgements in the following ways:

- moderating a sample of written applications at D1, D2 and D3.
- The sample should contain a meaningful proportion of the total submissions, which enables the purposes of moderation to be achieved.
- A minimum of eight submissions would be expected in most cases. Where fewer than eight submissions are received, the external moderator will be asked to look at all submissions.
- Attending all D3 oral panels where possible and moderating all oral assessments not attended

Results are sent to the External Moderator following each panel. The External Moderator then signs off the results to confirm agreement with the results. If there is a difference of opinion between the panel and the External Moderator, then the Manager of the FLAIR CPD and External Moderator hold further discussion.

The External Moderator submits an annual report which is discussed by the FLAIR Review and Enhancement group. The Manager of the FLAIR CPD scheme replies to this report. The External Moderator's report may also be fed back to appropriate institutional committees. Another layer of externality is provided by Advance HE. Advance HE has an open invitation to attend panels and can request from the University all documentation relating to an award of Fellowship made through an accredited programme. In addition the FLAIR CPD Manager is required to submit an annual report to Advance HE.

4c) Appeals and Complaints

Appeals and complaints need to be distinguished, one from another:

Appeal of result: An appeal of a result will only be considered on one or more of the following grounds:

- If there has been a procedural irregularity.
- If there has been bias.
- If there has been a material defect in the delivery of the FLAIR CPD Scheme which has had a significant impact on the result.

Please note, an appeal of a result shall not be considered on the ground of academic judgement.

The appeal form is available from Lisa Munday. Any appeal of result should be submitted within one month of the decision and feedback being sent.

Complaints: where an applicant has a complaint against the University relating to the delivery of the Scheme. The complaints procedure is explained below of this handbook.

The FLAIR CPD Scheme has been designed to align with the University’s Human Resources policies and procedures, including the Equality and Diversity Policy. The equality and diversity objectives of the scheme are the overarching measures that will guide the actions that the University will take to ensure that no individual, applicant, student, employee, provider, contractor or user of facilities is discriminated against on the grounds of their protected characteristics or socio-economic background. The University [equality scheme](#)⁹ provides a chance to further develop our longstanding disability agenda.

Appendix 3: Complaints Procedure

The FLAIR CPD scheme welcomes feedback from participants. Whilst most of the feedback we receive is positive, we recognise that from time to time problems do arise and participants may occasionally wish to express concern or dissatisfaction with aspects of the Scheme. We aim to use the feedback gathered from such complaints positively to help us to improve the Scheme and to enhance the experience for all participants.

Time limit for raising a complaint

It is generally in the best interests of all if concerns or complaints are raised as soon as possible after the relevant matter occurred. A formal complaint will normally only be accepted for consideration under Stage 1 of the procedure below if it has been submitted within one calendar month of the relevant matter occurring. If an applicant has not complied with a time limit specified in this procedure, the University will consider whether such an applicant, exceptionally, has good reason for delay.

Principles of the Complaints Procedure

Disputes regarding matters of academic judgment will not be considered under the Complaints Procedure.

- It is generally in the best interests of both the applicant and the University to resolve issues and concerns informally.
- The applicant will have a fair opportunity to present their complaint and will be provided with clear reasons for the outcome of each stage of the procedure.
- A complaint made anonymously will only be considered under exceptional circumstances, and where the nature of the complaint makes an investigation appropriate.
- Any applicant who makes a complaint in good faith will not be adversely affected by the fact of the complaint, whether or not the complaint is upheld.
- The University will implement reasonable adjustments to the procedure where appropriate.

Advice and guidance

The complainant may be accompanied by a ‘friend’ to any meeting or interview. The friend shall be, unless otherwise agreed by the person authorised to consider the complaint, a member of the Academic Staff of the University. If an applicant is unable to attend in person, they may attend via teleconference.

⁹ <http://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/humanresources/equality/humres-equality.aspx> .

Expected conduct during the procedure

All parties are expected at all stages to maintain appropriate confidentiality. However, details of a complaint may need to be shared with relevant colleagues to enable a full investigation to be carried out.

Informal early resolution stage

The University expects that the majority of issues and concerns can be resolved informally through discussion and negotiation.

To raise an issue or concern informally, the applicant should email the relevant member(s) of staff. The applicant should:

- be specific about the problem;
- describe the problem succinctly;
- provide supporting documentary evidence where available and appropriate; - state the outcome requested (be clear and realistic).

If requested by the applicant, the relevant staff member(s) will arrange to promptly meet with the applicant to discuss the issue or concern. The University will consider concerns carefully and, as appropriate, seek a resolution to any substantive issues identified. If the applicant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the informal consideration of their concern, the applicant may pursue the matter as a formal complaint by submitting a Stage 1 complaint letter normally no later than one month after the issue arose. The procedure for submitting a formal complaint is explained below.

Stage 1: Raising a formal complaint

To submit a formal Stage 1 complaint, the complainant must write a letter to the T&L Dean who oversees the FLAIR Framework. The letter should be sent to the FLAIR Administrator Lisa Munday who will pass the letter to the relevant T&L Dean.

An applicant may submit a Stage 1 complaint letter:

- if the applicant is not satisfied with the outcome of the informal consideration of the matter; OR
- if the University has informed the complainant that it is not appropriate to consider the issue or concern informally, and the University has directed the applicant to submit a Stage 1 formal complaint.

If the applicant has not sought an informal resolution of the issue, the T&L Dean may suggest that the applicant first pursues the matter through the informal route.

Information to be entered in the Stage 1 letter should include:

- complainant's name, address, contact telephone numbers and University email address;
- the nature of the complaint (attaching any supporting evidence where available);
- an outline of the steps taken to resolve the complaint informally at Stage 0, if applicable;
- details of the outcome the complainant is seeking.

Receipt of the complaint will be acknowledged by the FLAIR Administrator within three working days (subject to the availability of the relevant contact).

The Stage 1 complaint shall only be investigated by the T&L Dean with oversight of the FLAIR

Framework if he/she has had no previous involvement in the matter. If this colleague has been involved previously, the complaint will be passed to one of the T&L Deans.

Normally, the staff member investigating the complaint (i.e. the T&L Dean with oversight of the FLAIR Framework) will offer to interview the applicant to facilitate the investigation, and the applicant shall have the right to be accompanied by a 'friend'. Another member of staff will minute the meeting and the applicant shall receive a copy of the Minutes.

The Stage 1 outcome letter and the Stage 1 investigation report will normally be emailed to the applicant within 20 working days of submission of the Stage 1 complaint, unless a complex or prolonged investigation is required, in which case the complainant will be kept informed of the likely timescales.

If the staff member investigating the complaint upholds the complaint and recommends that the University should issue a remedy, the staff member investigating the complaint should receive approval from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience). The applicant should then be informed of when the appropriate remedy will be implemented.

The Stage 1 outcome letter should include:

- the procedure(s) followed;
- whether the complaint is upheld, partially upheld or not upheld;
- the remedy for the complaint, if the complaint is upheld or partially upheld; -
- inform the applicant that they may request a review of the outcome at Stage 2.

The Stage 1 investigation report should include:

- A report of the complaint and the findings;
- Minutes of any interviews/meetings held to investigate the complaint;
- A copy of all evidence considered relating to the complaint;
- A copy of correspondence with the applicant, and any relevant emails between University staff.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the Stage 1 investigation or its outcome, they may wish to pursue the complaint at Stage 2 of the Procedure. If the applicant wishes to request a Stage 2 review of the complaint, they must submit a Stage 2 complaint letter within 5 working days of receiving the Stage 1 outcome letter and the Stage 1 investigation report.

Stage 2: Review stage

If the complainant is not satisfied with the Stage 1 investigation or its outcome, they may wish to pursue the complaint at Stage 2 of the Procedure. If the applicant wishes to request a Stage 2 review of the complaint, they must email a Stage 2 complaint letter to the FLAIR Administrator Lisa Munday within 5 working days of receiving the Stage 1 outcome letter and the Stage 1 investigation report.

The complainant should include:

- the Stage 1 outcome letter and Stage 1 investigation report -
- a statement of why the complainant remains dissatisfied;
- details of the outcome the complainant is seeking.

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience) will review the complaint and determine:

- whether the Stage 1 outcome was reasonable in the circumstances;
- whether the relevant procedure(s) were followed;
- whether the applicant has been provided with clear reasons for the outcome of the complaint at Stage 1.
- consider any new information which the applicant was unable to provide for valid reasons earlier in the process; and
- consult as appropriate with a view to determining a suitable resolution of the complaint.

The Stage 2 review will not usually consider the issues afresh or involve a further investigation.

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience) will issue the University's formal Stage 2 response to the complainant. A full response will normally be sent within 30 working days of submission of the Stage 2 complaint, unless delay is unavoidable, in which case the complainant will be kept informed of the likely timescales.

In cases where the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience) has been involved at an earlier stage of the Procedure, the independent review at Stage 2 will be carried out by an alternative senior member of University staff.

Recording, reporting and learning from complaints

Following the outcome of an upheld or partially upheld complaint, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience) will be responsible for formally deciding what corrective action should be implemented, if any. Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints shall be recorded and reported to the FLAIR Enhancement Group

Appendix 4: Data Protection

We are committed to the protection and security of personal data. All documentation is handled in line with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018. Once enrolled on the FLAIR CPD Scheme your personal information is subject to the University's Data Protection Policy and guidelines

<http://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/imps/DataProtection/impshttp://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/imps/DataProtection/imps-data-protection.aspxdata-protection.aspx>

For the purposes of administration and monitoring we hold the following data on applicants:

- name; school/department; date enrolled; staff qualification on enrolment (according to HESA categories); category of Fellowship applied for; attendance at workshops/feedback meetings; outcome.
- The personal data held is, therefore, relevant and not excessive. We endeavour to ensure that all personal data is accurate and kept up to date

We may be required to share information relating to your participation in the FLAIR CPD Scheme, including your progress and outcome, with relevant members of staff within the University. We are also required to share certain personal data with Advance HE. This is for Advance HE accreditation purposes and so that Advance HE can contact you with information on next steps (such as how to download your Fellowship certificate). Disclosure of this data is, therefore, lawful, fair and transparent in all respects for the purposes of Data Protection Legislation.

The categories of Personal Data relating to Data Subjects shared with Advance HE are:

- name
- e-mail address
- enrolment date
- institution
- Advance HE Fellowship status gained

Records relating to the administration of the FLAIR Framework are archived and retained in line with institutional retention policy for as long as they are needed to ensure accountability of decision making and evidence of good standing. Records are held securely and in confidence, with limited access for authorised staff members only during this time. The [procedure for accessing your personal information is set out here](#)¹⁰, and you can also contact the [University Data Protection team](#) and Data Protection Officer for more information.

Appendix 5: Glossary of terms

ACRONYM	NAME IN FULL
ADE	Academic Development and Enhancement
APP	Academic Practice Programme (the taught route to Fellowship)
CQSD	Centre for Quality Support and Development

¹⁰ <http://www.reading.ac.uk/accessing-personal-data>

FLAIR	Facilitating Learning and Teaching Achievement and Individual Recognition
PSF	Professional Standards Framework