University of Reading

Higher Education Academy

Applying for Associate Fellowship Of Advance HE: Pathway for Doctoral Researchers

Handbook: 2023-24

This handbook was produced in September 2023 for applicants to the AFHEA pathway for doctoral researchers

Although the information in this guide is accurate at the time of publication, aspects of the 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 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.

The material in this guide can be provided in alternative formats upon request.

In addition to this handbook, you will find a range of resources on our website that will help you with your application: https://www.reading.ac.uk/reading-cqsd/Developing-and-enhancing/training-professional-development/cqsd-afheapgrresources.aspx

The guidance provided in this document is based on guidance provided by Advance HE and adapted to reflect the processes and extra support provided by the University of Reading. Advance HE guidance can be found here: https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/fellowship/associate-fellowship

If you have any queries relating to this pathway, please contact Dr Pam Stuart DoctoralandResearcherCollege@reading.ac.uk

Please note: From January 2023 Advance HE provide access to guidance for both UKPSF 2011 and the PSF 2023 in some contexts Advance HE are using PSF rather than UKPSF. You may find both used on documentation so please be aware of this. The FLAIR Framework will be using the UKPSF 2011 for the 2023-2024 academic year.

Contents

The FLAIR Framework[1] at the University of Reading

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 purpose[2]. 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](https://static.reading.ac.uk/content/PDFs/files/Aboutus/university-strategy.pdf)[3]. 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

Fellowship is a national - and increasingly international - recognition for being an effective teacher or supporter of learning in Higher Education (HE), and it is now seen by many as an essential step for careers linked to teaching and supporting learning in a HE context. Fellowship can be awarded at four categories depending on the experience and impact of the applicant (Associate Fellow - D1, Fellow - D2, Senior Fellow - D3, and Principal Fellow - D4). Though the categories might look hierarchical, they should not be thought of that way. They are not levels and are not sequential, and as such it is not necessary to have D1 to apply for D2. Instead,

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[1] **F**acilitating **L**earning and **T**eaching **A**chievement and **I**ndividual **R**ecognition
[2] About Teaching and Learning: https://www.reading.ac.uk/about/teaching-and-learning
[3] Srategic plan 2026: https://static.reading.ac.uk/content/PDFs/files/Aboutus/university-strategy.pdf

because the categories are linked to range and scope of impact, what they really represent is recognition tailored to different roles/career stages.

The FLAIR Framework has three routes to Fellowship:
- AFHEA Pathway for doctoral researchers: This leads to D1 (Associate Fellowship) and is for PhD students who also have some responsible 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
- 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

This handbook is aimed at colleagues who wish to apply for Associate Fellowship (D1) through the Doctoral Route.

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.

Fellowship is recognised by HESA[4] as a teaching qualification which means it has real value for individuals. In addition every Fellowship also contributes towards our institutional standing.

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[4] https://www.hesa.ac.uk/

What our participants say

"When I first learned about the AFHEA pathway for doctoral researchers, my initial interest was primarily in that the award will increase my confidence by providing a great boost to my CV. I can now say with confidence that the process of writing the application has been as much an enriching experience.

The AFHEA training, interaction with fellow applicants, feedback sessions with my mentor and writing & revising the application - each of these steps provided great learning in terms of teaching theory and practice. The reflective exercise helped me understand with better clarity why I did some things in the course of my teaching and support, what works well and what can be done better.

The award of the Fellowship is a validation (in a formal sense) of my academic efforts, ideas and identity. It has not only boosted my confidence; I also feel greatly motivated to engage more productively in teaching & support to enhance the academic experience for both myself and my students. I am already excited to work towards gathering evidence for the next stage in Fellowship!

I would definitely recommend other PhD students to go for the AFHEA pathway for doctoral researchers."

Shweta Band
School of Law

"In the frantic pace of our research and teaching commitments, putting together the AFHEA pathway application gave me the precious opportunity to stop and think critically about my teaching practice and the wealth of resources and the guidance provided by the wonderful CQSD Team helped me see the potential to improve my teaching skills. Gaining the fellowship gave me confidence about my professional path and growth in teaching and learning."

Andrea Romanzi
Department of Languages and Culture

You will find more quotes from applicants throughout the handbook.

The application process

After enrolment there are a number of stages to applying for AFHEA through the pathway for doctoral researchers. The following pages provide more detail on each stage of the process.

The full timeline of events from launch of the scheme to submission can be found in Appendix 1.

The application process for the AFHEA pathway for doctoral researchers	
1	Familiarise yourself with the UKPSF (pgs.7)
2	Familiarise yourself with the application requirements (p.11) - What counts as teaching[5] - Eligibility Criteria:[6]
3	Explore the resources on the website[7] (p.12)
4	Attend first compulsory workshop (face to face) (p.12)
5	Work on your application (p.13)
6	Attend second compulsory workshop (p.13)
7	Work on your application (p.14)
8	Attend third compulsory workshop (p.14)
9	Finish drafting your application (p.14)
10	Take feedback on your application (p.14)
11	Organise your supporting statements (p.15)
12	Submit application (p.16)

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[5] What counts as teaching: https://www.reading.ac.uk/cqsd/-/media/project/functions/cqsd/documents/what-counts-as-teaching.pdf?la=en&hash=B8BC0CFF7BC40C548E814EF94D868A89
[6] Eligibility Criteria: https://www.reading.ac.uk/cqsd/-/media/project/functions/cqsd/documents/eligibility-criteria-afhea-pathway-for-doctoral-researchers.pdf?la=en&hash=092AF757A683A560BCDDD76379F2149F
[7] CPD Scheme Website: https://www.reading.ac.uk/reading-cqsd/Developing-and-enhancing/training-professional-development/cqsd-afheapgrresources.aspx

Stage 1: Familiarise yourself with The Professional Standards Framework (PSF)[8]

It is crucial that applicants have a thorough understanding of the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF[9]) as it underpins every aspect of all Fellowship applications. The Professional Standards Framework is a comprehensive set of professional standards and guidelines which conceptualises the practice of teaching and supporting learning in HE in terms of 'Descriptors' and 'Dimensions'.

Descriptors

There are four Descriptors which correspond to four categories of Fellowship that can be awarded: Associate Fellowship, Fellowship, Senior Fellowship, Principal Fellowship.

There are two reasons for naming these aspects of the PSF 'Descriptors':

1. They describe a typical applicant at each category of Fellowship (Associate Fellow, Fellow, Senior Fellow and Principal Fellow) based on roles, responsibilities, influence and impact. Please note: these are illustrative - a far broader range of roles are relevant to each category than the few described in the PSF.

2. They describe what has to be evidenced by the applicant to achieve Fellowship (i.e. they represent the assessment criteria).
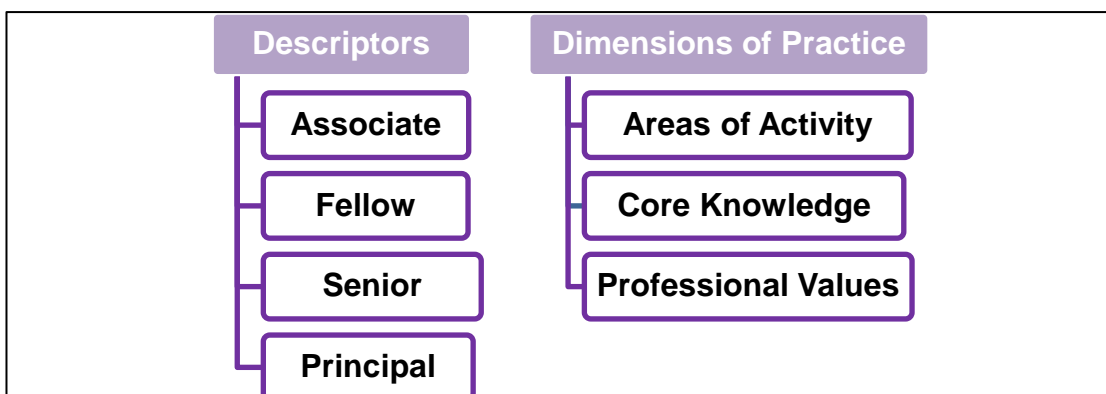
Dimensions of Practice

The four Descriptors are underpinned by three Dimensions of Practice which set out the knowledge, skills and behaviours expected of those teaching and/or supporting higher education learning.

- Areas of Activity (A1-5) (describing what a teaching and learning professional does)

- Core Knowledge (K1-6) (outlining what they need to know to carry out the activities)

- Professional Values (V1-4) (outlining the manner in which they should carry out their activity)

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[8] The PSF is developed by Advance HE and on behalf of the UK higher education sector, Guild HE and Universities UK. The copyright in this material and content is jointly owned by Advance HE, Guild HE and Universities UK. © Advance HE, Guild HE, Universities UK 2011. All Rights Reserved. Any redistribution or reproduction of part of or all of the contents in any form shall be strictly in accordance with PSF Terms of Use Policy which can be accessed here – https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/guidance/teaching-and-learning/ukpsf
[9] UKPSF: UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) | Advance HE (advance-he.ac.uk)

The UK Professional Standards Framework (PSF)

Descriptors	Dimensions of Practice
Associate	Areas of Activity
Fellow	Core Knowledge
Senior	Professional Values
Principal	

Dimensions of the Framework

Areas of Activity

A1 Design and plan learning activities and/or programmes of study

A2 Teach and/or support learning

A3 Assess and give feedback to learners

A4 Develop effective learning environments and approaches to student support and guidance

A5 Engage in continuing professional development in subjects/disciplines and their pedagogy, incorporating research, scholarship and the evaluation of professional practices

Core Knowledge

K1 The subject material

K2 Appropriate methods for teaching, learning and assessing in the subject area and at the level of the academic programme

K3 How students learn, both generally and within their subject/disciplinary area(s)

K4 The use and value of appropriate learning technologies

K5 Methods for evaluating the effectiveness of teaching

K6 The implications of quality assurance and quality enhancement for academic and professional practice with a particular focus on teaching

Professional Values

V1 Respect individual learners and diverse learning communities

V2 Promote participation in higher education and equality of opportunity for learners

V3 Use evidence-informed approaches and the outcomes from research, scholarship and continuing professional development

V4 Acknowledge the wider context in which higher education operates recognising the   implications for professional practice

PSF: Descriptor 1

To be awarded Associate Fellowship you must meet all 6 aspects of Descriptor 1 (D1.1-D1.6) set out below. The contents of your application need to demonstrate how you meet these.

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2" align="center">**DESCRIPTOR 1: ASSOCIATE FELLOW**</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">

D1 is appropriate for those able to provide evidence of effectiveness in relation to their professional role(s), which, typically, will include at least some teaching and/or learning support responsibilities. This teaching and learning role may sometimes be undertaken with the assistance of more experienced teachers or mentors. Typically, those likely to be at Descriptor 1 (D1) include:

a. Early career researchers with some teaching responsibilities (e.g. PhD students, GTAs, contract researchers/post-doctoral students etc.)
b. Staff new to teaching (including those with part-time academic responsibilities)
c. Staff who support academic provision (e.g. learning technologists, learning developers and learning resource/library staff)
d. Staff who undertake demonstrator/technician roles that incorporate some teaching-related responsibilities
e. ~~e.~~ Experienced staff in relevant professional areas who may be new to teaching and/or supporting learning, or who have a limited teaching portfolio

</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">

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

</td></tr>
</table>

D1 applicants will usually have been teaching or supporting learning in HE for a period of at least one year. If there are any personal circumstances that should be considered in relation to timeframe, these should be declared on the application form.

In addition, it is important to remember that it is the applicant's range of experience and impact that is most important, not simply the period of service or number of contact hours with learners.

Please note, the experience and evidence included in your application must relate to **practice and impact within an HE context[10]**.

Stage 2: Familiarise yourself with the application requirements for D1

The elements of a D1 application are set out below.

Section	Requirement(s)
1	**Contextual statement (p.18)**
2	**A Professional Activity Table (PAT) (p.19)** Three sections of the PAT proforma should be completed: • A5 (compulsory for all) • 2 other sections of choice from A1-A4
3	**An up-to-date CPD log and plan (p. 21)**
4	**A reference list (p.22)**
5	**Two supporting statements (p.22)**

Please note: the final element is not a substantial task for you. This is because someone else writes the supporting statements on your behalf. Your task is really to coordinate the process (sending your application and relevant resources to the people you've chosen to write the statements and then to attach the statements to your application when they are returned to you).

That means there are actually only four elements for you to work on. More information on these can be found on the pages indicated.

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[10] Advance HE's definition of Higher Education is outlined in Appendix 4.

"As someone who is coming to the end of my PhD program and shortly entering the academic world, gaining a professional qualification alongside the ability to reflect on my own teaching practice has been enlightening and incredibly useful. The AFHEA pathway has been a fantastic learning experience which has provided me with the opportunity to learn and grow as a practitioner."

Alex Scher-Smith
Henley Business School

Stage 3: Explore the resources on our website

To support you with preparing your application, we have developed a range of resources which you will find on the [website](11). These resources include:

- Practical information/resources:
    - Proformas (all the templates and forms you will need)
    - Useful documents
    - Timeline of events
- Resources to support you to write your application
    - Information about the PSF
    - Screencasts
    - Writing your application: Applicant Support Pack
    - Comprehensive reading lists
    - Mock CPD log and plan
    - Resources for preparing supporting statements

It is essential to familiarise yourself with these resources before you start to work on your application.

Stage 4: Attend first compulsory seminar

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 Appendix 1 on page 30.

Because attendance is compulsory, you will be automatically booked onto this event and joining information will be sent to you. Being a doctoral researcher can often be

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[11] Support for Applicants: [AFHEA pathway for doctoral researchers resources (reading.ac.uk)](reading.ac.uk)

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.

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

The purpose of the first seminar is:

- To introduce you to the PSF
- To talk you through the application process
- To support you in developing ideas to include in your contextual statement

Stage 5: Work on your application

During the time between each of the compulsory workshops you should be working on your application. After the first workshop the best things you can do are:

- Engage with the resources on the PSF (see website)
- Start drafting your contextual statement (see p.17)

Stage 6: Attend second compulsory workshop

The next stage is to attend the second taught workshop. Again, as attendance is compulsory, you will be automatically booked onto this event.

The second and third workshops are each structured around two Areas of Activity (AAs) of the PSF. The workshops provide you with opportunities to reflect on your experience, practice and impact on learning in relation to each AA so that you can choose which are most appropriate for including in your Professional Activity Table (PAT). You will also begin to develop and shape ideas for these sections of your application. You will find further information on the PAT on pages 18-19

The second workshop will offer:

- taught input focusing on Areas of Activity 1 & 3
- 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)

By the end of the workshop you will have made substantial inroads into your application as you will have generated ideas to include in your application and begun to plan how you will structure these ideas into an effective narrative.

Stage 7: Work on your application

During the time between workshops 2 and 3 you should continue working on your application. The best thing you can do at this stage is to engage with literature around aspects of practice relevant for Areas of Activity 1 and 3. You will find a useful reading list here on the website[12].

Stage 8: Attend third compulsory workshop

The next stage is to attend the third workshop. Again, as attendance is compulsory you will be automatically booked onto this event. The workshop will follow a similar format to the second workshop but will focus on Areas of Activity 2 and 4.

Stage 9: Finish drafting your application

During the second and third workshop you will be supported to actively begin drafting parts of your application. After the third workshop it is important for you to maintain momentum and to build on the start you have made during the workshop. A key resource to support you with this is the 'Writing your application: D1 Applicant Support Pack' which you will find on the website. This contains detailed information on what is expected in each section of the application, questions to help you to generate ideas, thinking frames for structuring your ideas and short examples from previous applications.

During this stage it is expected that your School mentor and supervisor will support you and provide some feedback as you draft your application. It is your responsibility to inform your mentor/supervisor that there are resources to support them on the website. You might also approach another AFHEA applicant for peer support. All of this will help you to keep moving forward and finish your application.

Stage 10: Take feedback on your application

As a final layer of feedback following feedback from your school-based mentor/supervisor in Stage 9 of the process, you will have the opportunity for a 30-minute feedback meeting with a tutor allocated by the Academic Development and Enhancement team (ADE) in CQSD. We will inform you of the name of your tutor and their email address at the appropriate time. It is your responsibility to schedule the meeting by emailing your tutor to arrange a **mutually** convenient time. The more notice you are able to provide the more effective the meeting will be. Meetings may be either face-to-face or virtual, as appropriate. It is up to you to decide when it is

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[12]Support for Applicants: https://www.reading.ac.uk/cqsd/-/media/project/functions/cqsd/documents/afhea-pathway-for-doctoral-researchers-applicant-support-pack.pdf

most useful to have this appointment – some choose to have it close to submission; others prefer to have it sooner for reassurance they are on the right lines.

You should send your draft to your ADE tutor in advance of the meeting. Being able to read the draft in advance allows your tutor to get a sense of how your application is looking and this enables them to give you better advice. In addition, the meeting will be more meaningful if you identify sections you want to concentrate on and/or come with specific questions.

To get the most out of your feedback meeting:

- 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 during the meeting but it is your responsibility to record any suggestions for revising the draft. Please be prepared to make notes during the meeting.

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 could result in the application demonstrating someone else's understanding. Similarly, those who provide feedback will be happy to make suggestions/recommendations but it is not their responsibility to shape the contents/ structure, and they cannot comment on the likely outcome.

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

Stage 11: Organise your supporting statements

Advance HE requires all Fellowship applications to include a form of validation. To meet this requirement you must submit **two** supporting statements.

With regard to the supporting statements your role is to:

- select two people who have first-hand experience of your practice and who can, therefore, draw on this to comment knowledgeably on your work in relation to the Areas of Activity covered in your application

- contact the people you have selected and ask them to provide supporting statements

- provide these people with the final draft of your application and the relevant information/resources (these can be found on the website). It is important that these people understand that their supporting statement must provide concrete examples of your work in relation to your chosen Areas of Activity

- check the statements when they are returned to you to make sure they meet the requirements

- embed the supporting statements within your application

The supporting statements are not the same as references. The people you choose need to be energetic champions for your submission, so, when choosing the people to write your supporting statements, ask yourself: 'Do they know about the areas of my work I'm including in my application? Will they be able to provide some concrete detail about that work and can they confirm that I have had positive impact on students?'

If any issues are identified (similarity to another statement/statement too short/statement fails to provide evidence against the Descriptors), the review process will be suspended until satisfactory statements are provided.
Don't forget to allow enough time for this stage as you prepare for submission. It will be frustrating for you if you have worked hard to be ready to submit but are then unable to because you are still waiting for your supporting statements. **We recommend allowing at least two weeks for this stage.**

Further information on the supporting statements can be found on p21

Stage 12: Submit your application

This page lists important information on preparing your application for submission to ensure it is processed without any difficulties. For details of the assessment process see p.24.

Preparing your application for submission
- To prepare your application for submission you should:
- complete the Application Form on page 2 of the proforma (you will find the template in the 'Useful Documents' section on the resources 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
    - paste the components of your application into the appropriate sections of the template
    - save the completed template as one pdf file
    - send this pdf file to Doctoral and Researcher College: DoctoralandResearcherCollege@reading.ac.uk
- Ethical considerations: Confidentiality must be adhered to in your application. It is your responsibility to remove the names of any individuals you refer to in the application. If you cannot guarantee anonymity, you need to inform individuals about the information that will be used the application. If you have permission to use names, this must be stated clearly in the application so that it is clear that there is no breach of confidentiality.
- Formatting your application
    - Font: Arial 11 point
    - Line spacing: 1.5
    - Page numbers should be indicated within the footer
    - Referencing:
        - Please use in-text citations (not footnotes)
        - Please use the Harvard referencing system

It is your responsibility to ensure the application is complete and meets requirements. If the application is incomplete or doesn't meet the requirements, we will be unable to process it. A 'Fit to submit' checklist is included on the application proforma. We encourage you to use this to check that your application meets the requirements.

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 your ADE tutor to discuss if an extension can be arranged.

Please note: 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.

Your application

Applications for D1 through the AFHEA pathway are made up of five components. Further information on each component can be found on the pages indicated.

Please note, the experience and evidence included in your application must relate to practice and impact within an HE context.

"Whilst engaging with the pathway I learned more about my teaching and learning philosophy, values, methods and approaches to teaching and learning, and my impact on learners/learning. Writing about myself, my strengths and weaknesses and evaluating these qualities against a framework forced me to not only self-reflect but also articulate a process that is typically highly internalised. This is not an interview process; this is a humanising process. The panel is not looking at you as a cookie-cutter applicant, but as a unique individual with strengths (and weaknesses — yes this is equally important) that explain what makes you uniquely qualified to acquire Fellowship.

Since applying I have become much more mindful of my role as not just someone who imparts knowledge, but reflects on the 'why' and the 'why not' of teaching young adults."

Arjun Khara
Dept. of Typography & Graphic Communication

The Contextual Statement

The first part of your application is a contextual statement. Although this is not assessed, it is nevertheless an important part of the application. Applicants hold a variety of roles and work in a range of contexts. The contextual statement is a place where applicants can set out any specific information that might help the reader to tune in and understand the work being presented.

As well as helping the reader, the contextual statement also helps you as the writer. Putting important contextual information here means you don't have to do it in the main application and that means you can use the allocated word count to best advantage to present your case for Associate Fellowship.

Things you might include in the contextual statement are:

- a short career history (focusing on prior professional experience that is relevant to your current work);
- your experience of teaching or supporting learning in HE;
- any specific information about your role at the University of Reading or about your department/school that the reader needs to know;
- any information on the student cohorts you teach;
- information about any contexts included in your submission that are beyond our institution (please remember, however, that anything included in the application should refer to work in an HE context);
- the pedagogic philosophy or principles that underpin your approach to your work.

The contextual statement should be no more than one side of A4. The 'Writing your application: Applicant Support Pack' which you will find on the webpage for the AFHEA pathway has more information and some activities to help you to write your contextual statement.

Wanting to make a career in academia, taking any opportunity that makes you stand out from the rest of the competition is important and gaining professional accreditation for your teaching experience through the FLAIR pathway goes a long way.

The workshops, advice, and support from the CQSD staff were outstanding throughout the entire process and made what could be a confusing process simple. I have no doubt that my confidence in being able to teach at this level and pedagogy has improved thanks to this course and would highly recommend it to anyone who is serious about teaching higher education.

Sam Aspinall
School of Pharmacy

The Professional Activity Table (PAT)

The major component of your application is the Professional Activity Table (PAT). This is where you make your case for Fellowship by showing how your experience and skills align with the expectations for Associate Fellowship.

The requirements at D1 are that the PAT should cover 3 Areas of Activity:
- Area of Activity 5 (compulsory for all D1 applicants)
- Two further Areas of Activity from A1-A4 self-selected by the applicant

The indicative word count per Area of Activity is 600 words, meaning the total word count for the PAT is **1800 words** (3 x 600 words).

Deciding which two Areas of Activity to choose for your PAT is an important stage in planning and developing your application. It may be very clear to you immediately that your evidence aligns with some Areas of Activity more than others because of the nature of your practice. If not, then the steps below should help you to decide:

- The 'Applying for Associate Fellowship: D1 Applicant Support Pack' has lists of relevant activities for each Area of Activity. Look at the lists for A1-A4 (remember A5 is compulsory) and highlight where you have relevant experience. Compare across the Areas of Activity to identify where you have the strongest experience. [13]
- Talk to someone locally with knowledge of the scheme
- Ask during a workshop

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[13] Support Pack: https://www.reading.ac.uk/cqsd/-/media/project/functions/cqsd/documents/afhea-pathway-for-doctoral-researchers-applicant-support-pack.pdf

Your PAT needs to convince the reader that all six aspects of the D1 Descriptor have been addressed (D1.1-D1.6). The tips and advice below will also help you to do this:

- D1.1 and D1.2 assess evidence in relation to the Areas of Activity. Don't think that because the PAT is structured around the Areas of Activity, you have automatically met these two criteria. To be convincing your PAT needs to demonstrate both **breadth** and **depth** of practice. For this reason, don't concentrate on a narrow range of experience/examples. Drawing on one example within an Area of Activity is not recommended. However, trying to include too many examples in each section compromises your ability to explore ideas in depth. **In keeping with Advance HE Guidance, we advise providing two examples of your practice per Area of Activity (preferably examples that show different aspects of your practice).**

- To fully address D1.3 and D1.4 your PAT must be mapped to relevant Core Knowledge and Professional Values. This is because reviewers need to be convinced that you have a full understanding of the PSF. Being able to show how your practice demonstrates Core Knowledge and Professional Values helps to achieve this. However, you should avoid over-mapping. Real understanding of the PSF is demonstrated through strategically aligning the text to the Areas of Activity, Core Knowledge and Professional Values. You will find examples of how to align the PAT to the PSF in the Applicant Support Pack.

- D1.2 refers to **appropriate teaching practices**. Think about how you can show that the pedagogic methods and approaches you use are 'appropriate'. Is it because they are appropriate for your discipline/subject/ professional context? Is it that the approaches you use are appropriate for the specific students you teach? You can see that addressing D1.2 can also help you to evidence K2, K3, V1 and V2.

- D1.5 requires you to incorporate subject and pedagogic research and/or scholarship within the narrative. Essentially you have to demonstrate that your practice is evidence-informed. One type of evidence practitioners draw on to inform their professional practice is pedagogic research and scholarship. References to pedagogic research and literature should, therefore, be cited within each section of your PAT and a reference list provided. You will find comprehensive reading lists on our website to help you with this. In addition Education Research Complete is an excellent resource for searching for relevant literature[14]

- There is a space within the template where you should insert a reference list of the works you have cited (please note, this should be a reference list, not a bibliography). Please use the Harvard system[15].

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[14] Education Research Complete www.reading.ac.uk/library/eresources/databases/lib-education-research-complete.aspx

[15] Harvard Referencing: Different styles & systems of referencing - Citing references - LibGuides at University of Reading

- D1.6 requires you to demonstrate successful engagement in professional development activity (CPD) related to your teaching, learning and assessment responsibilities. The A5 section of your PAT and your CPD log/plan (see page 18) help to address D1.6. However, rather than relying on these to demonstrate D1.6, making reference to how CPD has impacted on your practice in other sections of your PAT will show more effectively how you embed learning from CPD and this will strengthen your application. For example, in your A3 section you might refer to how your practice in giving feedback was informed by attending a CPD event, reading literature or consulting a more experienced colleague.

I am convinced that having obtained AFHEA status through the FLAIR pathway will help me to compete for jobs in academia and elsewhere. Having your contribution to teaching and learning officially recognized underlines your competences and makes a good impression on employers. Many thanks to the team for the excellent organization of the workshops and their tremendous help in putting together the application!

Marat Shardimgaliev
Department of Philosophy

Your CPD Log and Plan

Because engaging with continuing professional development is seen as being of fundamental importance for those teaching and supporting learning in HE, one aspect of the Associate Fellow Descriptor (D1.6) focuses specifically on this. For this reason you are required to submit a CPD log and a CPD plan as part of your application.

In deciding whether an application meets D1.6, reviewers look for evidence of **proactive engagement with a range of CPD activity.** Reviewers understand that at this stage of your academic career your experience of formal professional development activity may not be extensive. For that reason they will consider your application holistically and take a broad view of what constitutes CPD activity. Essentially they will look for evidence that you take professional responsibility for and are committed to continually updating and developing your practice. Further guidance can be found in the 'Writing your application: Applicant Support Pack'.

As well as the CPD log you are also required to provide a CPD plan where you outline your plans for further professional development. Your CPD plan should include information on:

- What you want to learn
- What you need to do to achieve this
- What resources/support you will need
- How you will know you have succeeded

- A target date.

You will find an example of a CPD log and plan on the website.

While the CPD log and plan are essential parts of your application, they are not enough in themselves to meet Descriptor 1.6. Strengthen evidence against this Descriptor by including within your PAT some explicit reference to the impact that CPD has had on your practice.

Reference list

One of the criteria for Associate Fellowship (D1.5) requires you to incorporate subject and pedagogic research and/or scholarship within the narrative. Essentially you have to demonstrate that your practice is evidence-informed. Relevant pedagogic research and literature should, therefore, be cited within each section of your PAT to underpin your arguments. There is a space within the template where you should insert a reference list of the works you have cited (please note, this should be a reference list, not a bibliography). Please use the Harvard system[16]

Supporting statements: Frequently asked questions

Who should I choose to write my supporting statements?
- Within the application you will probably focus on certain aspects of your work and not mention other aspects. Because the purpose of the supporting statements is to confirm and complement the claims you make in your application, the most important thing is to choose people who can comment knowledgeably and credibly on the work you are presenting from their first-hand experience of your practice.
- The people best placed to comment knowledgeably on your work might work within your immediate context but this will not always be the case. For that reason it is acceptable to choose someone external to your department/school/the institution if that is most relevant. However, you are strongly encouraged to choose at least one person internal to the institution. On the enrolment form, your Head of School/Department confirmed that a suitable mentor will be provided to support your teaching activities and application to the scheme. It is very common for this mentor to provide a supporting statement.
- Ideally the supporting statements should be from people who have HEA Fellowship themselves as they will understand the PSF and the application requirements. However, because we appreciate that this might not always be possible, it is not a requirement. The important thing is that whoever you

[16] Harvard Referencing: Different styles & systems of referencing - Citing references - LibGuides at University of Reading

choose must be able to align their comments to the Descriptors/Dimensions of the PSF as this is required on the proforma.

Is any support provided for preparing supporting statements?

Yes. On the website you will find a section called 'Resources for preparing supporting statements'. This contains:

- Preparing a supporting statement: guidance notes (including some sample comments for supporting statements aligned to the PSF at D1)
- A screencast on writing a supporting statement
- The supporting statement proforma

Colleagues who work within our institution will have access to these documents. It is your responsibility to provide relevant information to anyone external to the institution who you ask to prepare a supporting statement. This should include the PSF so that they can align their statement to the Framework.
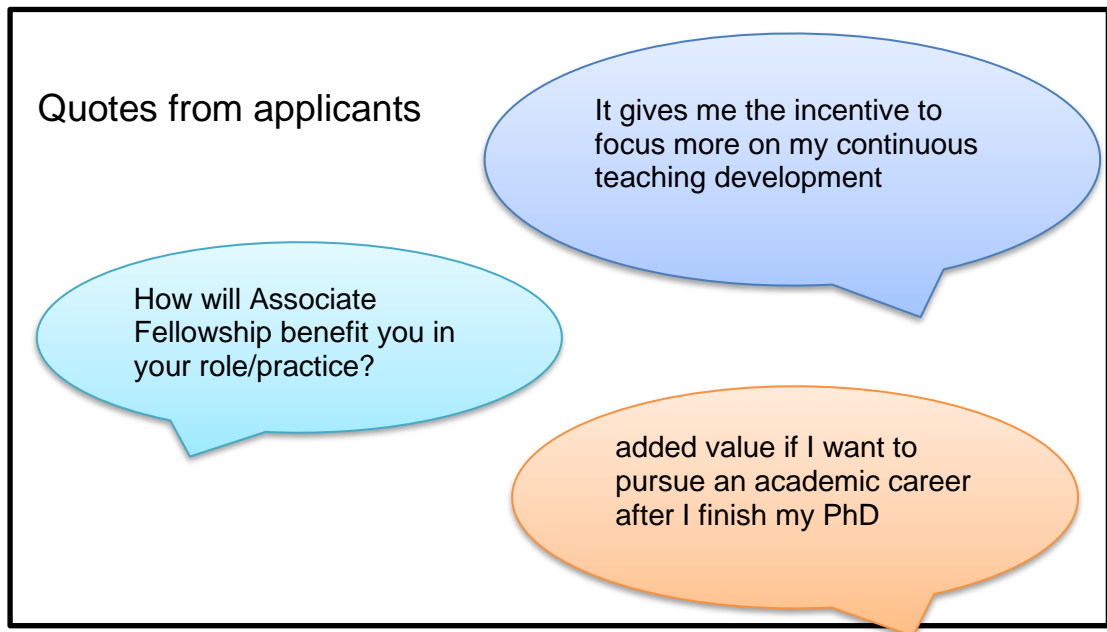
Who should the supporting statement be sent to?

The supporting statements should be sent directly to you so that you can attach them to your application. **Please note that it is your responsibility to check that the statements are completed correctly, of an appropriate length and fulfil the expectation of providing concrete examples of your work and impact.** Your application will be returned if it does not meet the expected requirements and/or the review process may be paused if the statements do not provide sufficient validation of your claim.

Please note:

- because the purpose of the supporting statements is to validate the claims you make, it is not helpful if new information is introduced in a supporting statement. You should make sure the people providing the statements are aware of this and that they concentrate on their knowledge of the aspects of your work you have chosen to draw on in your application
- a key principle is that it is the applicant's responsibility to make a satisfactory claim for Fellowship. The reviewers cannot draw on a supporting statement to compensate for a 'refer'. Your application must be sufficient in itself to meet the D1 criteria.

Top tip: The people proving the supporting statements have to sign a declaration confirming that they have read your application. You, therefore, have to send the draft to them so that they can read it before writing the statement. Make sure you send it in good time so that they can read it, draft the statement and get it back to you in time for it to be attached to your application and submitted by the deadline. It will be disappointing and frustrating for you if your application is ready but you cannot submit because you are still waiting for a supporting statement. We recommend allowing at least two weeks for this stage in the process.

Quotes from applicants

It gives me the incentive to focus more on my continuous teaching development

How will Associate Fellowship benefit you in your role/practice?

added value if I want to pursue an academic career after I finish my PhD

Support for applicants

Colleagues from the ADE team in CQSD can support you in developing your application. They will do this at the workshop and by giving feedback on your draft. The main source of additional support as you prepare your application is your school-based mentor. It is your responsibility to inform your mentor/supervisor that there are resources to support them on the website[17].

Educational (Pedagogic) Literature

Reference to relevant literature is an essential part of your application. This is because integrating subject specific/generic pedagogic knowledge or other relevant literature into your application enables you to meet the requirements of the PSF (D1.5, A5 and V3).

To support you with this we provide comprehensive reading lists on our website. In addition Education Research Complete is an excellent resource for searching for relevant literature[18]

Fit to Submit checklist

It is your responsibility to ensure that your application is ready for submission. If anything is missing or incomplete, we will not be able to process your application. A 'Fit to Submit' checklist is embedded within the application proforma. We encourage you to use this to evaluate if everything is in place before you submit your application.

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[17] Support for Applicants: AFHEA pathway for doctoral researchers resources (reading.ac.uk)
[18] Education Research Complete www.reading.ac.uk/library/eresources/databases/lib-education-research-complete.aspx

"Teaching is an integral part of our role of doctoral researchers. To be effective in this process that aims at the dissemination of knowledge, it is of paramount importance demonstrating that our practices are aligned with national standards. For this reason, I applied for the FLAIR pathway for doctoral researchers to AFHEA status. During the scheme, I was not only able to enrich my knowledge on the UKPSF but also had the possibility to share and compare my teaching practices. The support provided through examples and the identification of fundamental theoretical underpinnings has been remarkable during the workshops.

I especially found useful the 1:1 sessions with my mentor. She was able to give clear guidance and feedback, highlighting the areas I needed to strengthen for my AFHEA application. I am proud to be now recognised as AFHEA for my commitment to professionalism in teaching and learning in higher education. I truly believe this will help me in the future steps of my academic carrier."

Matteo Borghi
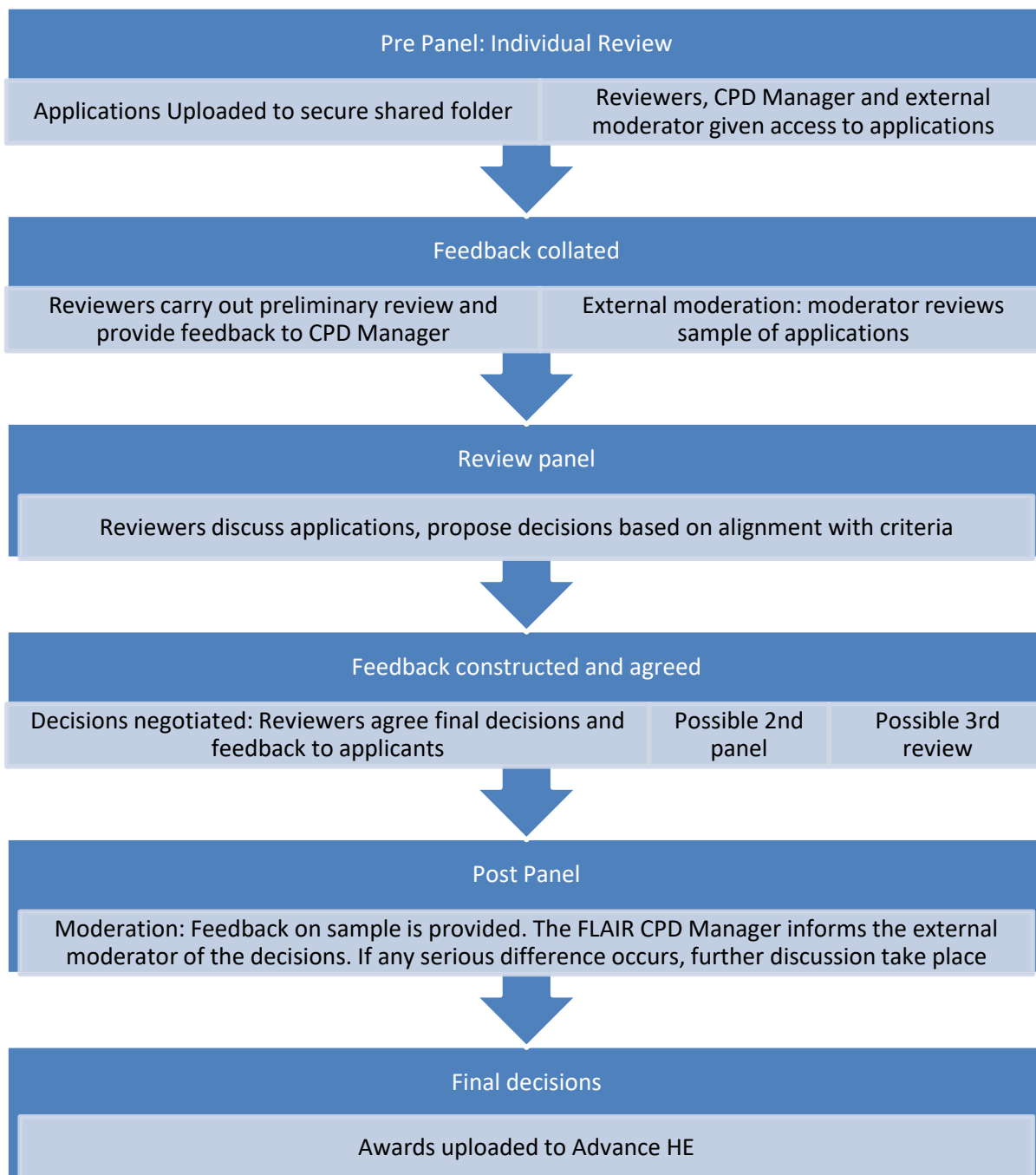Postgraduate researcher/Graduate Teaching Assistant

The assessment process

Each submission to the AFHEA Pathway for doctoral researchers is assessed by a panel of two reviewers. All reviewers are trained and must sit on at least two panels each year in order to be eligible to review applications. All those who review applications to the scheme hold HEA Fellowship.

The reviewers will be looking for evidence that your practice meets the requirements of Descriptor 1 across your PAT and will check that the two Supporting Statements provide appropriate endorsement for your application. They will assess your application against each of the criteria for Descriptor 1. Each reviewer will read your application and will apply the Descriptor 1 criteria to reach an initial independent judgement. The two reviewers then reach a combined consensus judgement.

There are a number of phases to each review. Each phase may also involve differing layers of moderation and you will receive the decision and feedback on your application by the date indicated in appendix 1 on page 30. This time is used for reviewers to look at the application individually before sharing their thoughts at a panel. Feedback and decisions are then formalised. Sometimes there is a need to negotiate reviews and decisions and we set some time aside for this which may involve a second panel or a third review. A selection of applications are moderated by

our external reviewer before final decisions are returned to you. 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.

Pre Panel: Individual Review

| Applications Uploaded to secure shared folder | Reviewers, CPD Manager and external moderator given access to applications |

Feedback collated

| Reviewers carry out preliminary review and provide feedback to CPD Manager | External moderation: moderator reviews sample of applications |

Review panel

Reviewers discuss applications, propose decisions based on alignment with criteria

Feedback constructed and agreed

| Decisions negotiated: Reviewers agree final decisions and feedback to applicants | Possible 2nd panel | Possible 3rd review |

Post Panel

Moderation: Feedback on sample is provided. The FLAIR CPD Manager informs the external moderator of the decisions. If any serious difference occurs, further discussion take place

Final decisions

Awards uploaded to Advance HE

Reviewers will be looking for evidence that your practice meets the requirements of Descriptor 1 across your PAT and will check that the two Supporting Statements provide appropriate endorsement for your application. They will assess your application against each of the Descriptor 1 statements. Each reviewer will read your application and evaluate it against the Descriptor 1 criteria to reach an initial independent judgement. The two reviewers then reach a combined consensus judgement.

There are two possible outcomes:

Award:
- The evidence provided is sufficient to meet the criteria set down in the UKPSF. Associate Fellowship is awarded and applicants are informed of the decision by email
- 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 3 months of date of referral) and reviewed by original reviewers. An additional 200 words is allowed for resubmissions making an overall maximum of 2000 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 2000 words. Resubmissions must be received within 3 months of the date of referral. Only one resubmission is allowed.

If unsuccessful at the second attempt (or the resubmission is not received within 3 months), 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.

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. Usually when we upload awards to Advance HE we are required to confirm that the person being awarded Fellowship is an employee of the University of Reading. When uploading your results we will be using your pgr@reading.ac.uk email address and confirming that you are a current student of the University

Remaining in good standing

The [HEA Code of Practice](#)[19] makes clear that there are expectations of Fellows post award so that they 'remain in good standing' in relation to their Fellowship category. As a result of this, embedded within the FLAIR Framework is an expectation of giving back something back after completion in order to 'remain in good standing'. As an Associate Fellow and doctoral researcher there are various ways you can do this. These include:

- becoming a buddy to one of your peers who is applying for Associate Fellowship
- providing advice and support to other doctoral researchers
- continuing to develop your knowledge and understanding of teaching and learning by observing more experienced colleagues or seeking feedback on your own teaching activities
- continuing to engage with the literature and scholarship of teaching and learning.

We recommend that you keep your CPD log up-to-date after you gain Fellowship as evidence that you are remaining in good standing in relation to Descriptor 1.6**.**

Quality Assurance

Full information on Quality Assurance Processes (including how to raise a concern, or make an appeal or complaint) and on Data Protection can be found as Appendices 5 and 6.

And finally…

If you have any questions, please contact Dr Pam Stuart ([doctoralandresearchercollege@reading.ac.uk)](mailto:doctoralandresearchercollege@reading.ac.uk). We look forward to working with you on your FLAIR application and in supporting you to gain recognition for the work you are doing.

Good luck with your FLAIR application.

The AFHEA pathway has been a brilliant opportunity to further my skill set as a doctoral researcher and gain professional recognition for teaching practice. Supporting BSc/MSc students in their learning is an aspect of my role I really enjoy. As part of your personal application process you learn further about teaching practices, how they apply to your field and reflect upon the type of educator you are and want to be in future. It's another really satisfying goal to work towards, alongside PhD research, and the team are really supportive. I was so pleased to be awarded AFHEA, I'd really recommend this to any doctoral researchers with involvement and interest in teaching!

Rachael Chandler

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[19] Code of practice: [Fellowship Code of Practice | Advance HE (advance-he.ac.uk)](https://advance-he.ac.uk)

Appendices

1. Timeline of events from launch up to submission
2. Top tips for writing your PAT
3. Why might an application be unsuccessful?
4. Quality assurance
- Internal quality assurance processes
- External quality assurance processes
  - Information about external moderation
- Appeals and complaints
  - Complaints procedure
5. Data Protection
6. Higher Education and eligibility for Fellowship
7. Glossary of terms

"As a clinical pharmacist and a university lecturer for several years, I have very good experience in research, learning and teaching. However, when the opportunity came to formalise my way of teaching, I decided to catch it by applying to the FLAIR CPD scheme. I was very lucky to join the two days' workshop with highly qualified CQSD staff. The taught courses were very much informative, interactive, and really made me think about possible examples in my previous work and how these examples could be used appropriately in the application. The feedback sessions were also no less important than the workshops. I believe that there is some type of knowledge that can only be gained through experience. The staff member was exceptional in her wisdom and professionalism in feeding back on my application draft.

The FLAIR CPD scheme has provided me with an extremely useful opportunity to clarify my pedagogy in research and teaching. It also helped me to learn more about new pedagogical strategies and different styles of learning which I would like to apply in the future to effectively enhance my way of teaching and learning."

Mais Iflaifel
School of Chemistry, Food & Pharmacy

Appendix 1: Timeline of events from launch to submission

Mon 27th Nov 2023	Launch by the Doctoral and Researcher College of the 2023-2024 AFHEA Pathway for Doctoral Researchers. Includes the invitation to apply to the Scheme.
8th January 2024	Deadline for submitting 'Application to enrol' form to the Doctoral and Researcher College. (You will find the proforma on the website)
Week commencing 15th January 2024	Meeting between Doctoral and Researcher College and CQSD ADE to discuss applications.
26th January 2024	Deadline for Doctoral and Researcher College to have identified suitable participants and to have notified both successful/unsuccessful applicants.
Timeline for successful applicants from the application to apply stage.	
Stage 1 *Feb*	Attend first compulsory taught workshop (Wednesday 7th February 2024 – 09:30-13:00). The first session is face to face while those subsequent are held online.
Stage 2 *March*	Attend second compulsory taught workshop (Tuesday 19th March 2024 – 09:30-13:00)
Stage 3 *May*	Attend third and final compulsory taught workshop (Thursday 9th May 2024 – 09:30-13:00).
Stage 4 *May – August*	Working towards completion of your application.

The sequence at Stage 4 is as follows:

Working on draft → Feedback appointment → Revise draft in response to feedback

The scheme includes an opportunity for oral feedback on your draft application. You will be allocated a tutor who you should then contact (via email or Teams) to arrange a meeting for feedback on your draft. You should agree:

- a mutually convenient date for a virtual one-to-one 'feedback' appointment
- the date for sending a draft section or final draft of the application in readiness for the feedback appointment and how the draft will be shared

Your tutor will confirm the date and time by email and share any required media link.

	Oral feedback will be provided during the meeting. It is your responsibility to record/take notes of any suggestions for revising your draft.
Stage 5	Organize your supporting statements.
Stage 6 By 4pm (BST) Wednesday 11th September 2024	You should have: • Pasted the components of your application to the appropriate sections of the template. • Saved the completed template as one pdf file • Sent your pdf file to the Doctoral and Researcher College doctoralandresearchercollege@reading.ac.uk
Autumn Term	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 22nd November 2024. Details of successful applicants will be uploaded onto the Advanced HE web portal. Successful applicants will receive notification directly from Advance HE with instructions on how to 'claim' their HEA Fellowship and professional recognition.

Appendix 2: Top tips for writing your PAT

1. **Make a strong claim:** Think of your application as making a claim that you deserve to be awarded HEA 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. This is because their assumptions could be incorrect and potentially lead to Fellowship being awarded wrongly. It is up to you to make the claim.

2. **It's all about you:** Because your PAT is a personal account, the focus throughout should be on your own professional practice and decision-making. Where you work as part of a team, clearly draw out your own contribution. And in a Fellowship application you should write in a subjective, rather than objective, way

3. **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

4. **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 application will be written in descriptive, 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 that you include specific examples of how you have worked with particular students. And remember, the quality of the examples is much more important than the quantity

5. **Currency and Sufficiency:**
    a. HEA Fellowship can only be awarded on the basis of <u>current</u> 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.
    b. If you have recently taken on a new role, you will not yet have <u>sufficient</u> evidence of impact in the role. Keep this up your sleeve for any future application.

6. **CPD and scholarship:** In order to meet D1.5 and D1.6 it is essential to draw out how CPD and scholarship have informed the work/practice being presented:
    a. CPD: Area of Activity 5 and the CPD log help to evidence D1.6 but are not sufficient in themselves. Make links in your PAT to how you have applied learning from CPD and draw out how it has impacted on your practice. Adding short annotations to some entries in the CPD log to indicate how this activity impacted on your practice also strengthens evidence for this Descriptor
    b. Scholarship: To address D1.5 you need to show that your practice is evidence-based. One way of doing this is by referring to relevant subject and pedagogic research and/or scholarship. (How you evidence this will depend on the context in which you are working and your subject/ discipline). You will find comprehensive reading lists for each Area of Activity on the website.

7. **The reflective practitioner:** Avoid simple description or lists. The reviewers are looking for evidence of a reflective approach to practice. This simply means showing 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

8. **Be present in your application:** Fellowship applications should be <u>personal</u> 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'. So ask yourself whether:
    a. You are fully present in the application. Does your personal philosophy come through (e.g. your approach to teaching and learning)? If you follow the tips above, the reviewers will definitely feel they have got to know you.
    b. What is your role/where is your agency? 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.

Appendix 3: Why might an application be referred?

The majority of applications to the scheme are successful at the first attempt but occasionally there is a need to refer applications. It is difficult to generalise about reasons for referral where they do occur because we receive applications from colleagues working in many different contexts. However, some common reasons for referral are outlined below.

- **The claim isn't clear or robust:**
    - The applicant does not draw out the impact sufficiently. Sometimes an applicant can assume that the work will speak for itself. However, the panel cannot make any assumptions or join up the dots for you; they can only make judgements based on what is presented. It is your responsibility to make the claim (draw out the impact of your work)
    - There is too much narrative without sufficient tangible examples for the claims to be robust and credible
    - The applicant does not take sufficient ownership. If work has been undertaken as part of a team, you must draw out your own individual contribution to the activities and the impact it has had so that the claim for your impact is clear.

- **Insufficient evidence of a scholarly approach to practice:**
    - Applications are referred if they do not refer to and apply relevant literature and/or other evidence/professional resources that have influenced practice.

- **Insufficient evidence of reflection:**
    - Successful applications clearly demonstrate a questioning and critical approach to practice. Too much narrative or writing at a superficial level about practice would be an issue.

- **Insufficient evidence of sustained engagement with pedagogic CPD:**
    - Reviewers are looking for proactive and sustained engagement with a range of CPD activity. Issues related to CPD include:
        - the CPD log/plan is brief
        - the CPD log concentrates on organisational/procedural activities (rather than teaching and learning)
        - the CPD log includes mandatory CPD (e.g. Data Protection training). This is an issue as it does not demonstrate a proactive approach to CPD
        - there are unexplained gaps in the CPD log
        - the CPD log is 'padded out' with routine activity (e.g. meetings)
        - the CPD plan is more career/research focused than about professional development in relation to teaching and learning33

The Applicant Support Pack and the workshops you will have attended will give you further tips and advice for writing your CPD log.

- **Supporting statements provide insufficient validation of practice:**

○ Advance HE require validation of all applications from someone who can comment knowledgeably on the applicant from first-hand experience of their practice. The supporting statement must contain specific examples that illustrate how the applicant's work exemplifies the Dimensions and Descriptors of the PSF. An application might be referred if the supporting statements are too short or too generic (i.e. they do not provide sufficient concrete detail to signify that the person writing it has sufficient depth of knowledge of the applicant's practice).

Appendix 4: 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
- external moderator (PFHEA)
- representation from ADE
    - ○ Head of ADE (SFHEA)
    - ○ Manager of FLAIR CPD Scheme (PFHEA)
    - ○ Programme Director for the APP (SFHEA)
- 2 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 a Principal Fellow of the HEA and has extensive experience of the PSF and of awarding Fellowship. Our current external moderator is Sabrina Poma from the 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

- o 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 applications. 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.
- 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:
  - o If there has been a procedural irregularity
  - o If there has been bias
  - o 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

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 provides a chance to further develop our longstanding disability agenda and the whole scheme can be accessed via the following link
http://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/humanresources/equality/humres-equality.aspx.

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.

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

1.1 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 l.j.m.munday@reading.ac.uk who will pass the letter to the relevant T&L Dean

1.2 An applicant may submit a Stage 1 complaint letter:
   a) if the applicant is not satisfied with the outcome of the informal consideration of the matter; OR
   b) 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.

1.3 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.

1.4 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

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

1.6 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

1.7 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.

1.8 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

1.9 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

1.10   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.

1.10 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

a. 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.

b. 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.

c. The complainant should include:

i. the Stage 1 outcome letter and Stage 1 investigation report

        ii.   a statement of why the complainant remains dissatisfied;

        iii. details of the outcome the complainant is seeking.

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

        i.   whether the Stage 1 outcome was reasonable in the circumstances;

        ii.   whether the relevant procedure(s) were followed;

        iii. whether the applicant has been provided with clear reasons for the outcome of the complaint at Stage 1.

        iv. consider any new information which the applicant was unable to provide for valid reasons earlier the process; and

        v.   consult as appropriate with a view to determining a suitable resolution of the complaint.

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

  f. 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

3.1 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.

3.2 Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints shall be recorded and reported to the FLAIR Enhancement Group

Appendix 5: 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 pathway for doctoral researchers your personal information is subject to the University's Data Protection Policy and guidelines http://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/imps/DataProtection/imps-data-protection.aspx

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

- name; school/department; 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 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.

If you would like to access your personal information please follow the procedure set out here: www.reading.ac.uk/accessing-personal-data

The University Data Protection team and Data Protection Officer can be contacted at imps@reading.ac.uk

Appendix 6: Higher education and eligibility for Fellowship[20]

The aspects of practice drawn on in a Fellowship application should relate to teaching and/or support for learning (and, therefore, to impact) **within higher education.** Advance HE defines higher education provision as:

- level 4 or above within the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, or equivalent
- level 7 or above within the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) in Scotland on the Framework for Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions (FQHEIS) or equivalent
- first cycle or above of the Qualifications Framework in the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA);

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[20] Adapted from Eligibility for HEA Fellowship – February 2018 https://s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/assets.creode.advancehe-document-manager/documents/advance-he/Eligibility-for-Fellowship-in-UK-February%202018_1574434502.pdf

- other equivalent higher education frameworks
- activity focused on supporting students within a higher education context, providing the student(s) are enrolled on a Higher Education Qualification may also be considered as evidence equivalent to the higher education frameworks above
- delivery of non-accredited continuing professional development for academic and learning support staff may also be considered as evidence equivalent to the higher education frameworks

In defining what constitutes HE teaching and learning within different international contexts, in order to determine eligibility for Fellowship, Advance HE uses UK NARIC (National Recognition Information Centre) information about international 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 HEA 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 HE has been further defined for staff in UK and Australasia. If you are unsure whether the examples of practice within your application meets the eligibility requirements above, contact us or fellowship@advance-he.ac.uk

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The FLAIR programme has provided the structure and support to enable me to reflect more widely on my own teaching practices, and has provided the tools to facilitate continued professional and self-development. In completing the qualification for AFHEA accreditation, I feel more confident and empowered to progress further with my career ambitions.

Lindsay Banfield
Department of Archaeology

Appendix 7: Glossary of terms

ADE	Academic Development and Enhancement
APP	Academic Practice Programme (the taught route to Fellowship)
CQSD	Centre for Quality Support and Development
DELT	University Sub-Committee on Development and Enhancement of Learning and Teaching (DELT)
FLAIR	**F**acilitating **L**earning and **T**eaching **A**chievement and **I**ndividual **R**ecognition
HEA	Higher Education Academy (Whilst the HEA no longer exists but is part of Advance HE, the term 'HEA Fellowship'' currently remains.
Panel	All applications to the pathway for doctoral researchers are reviewed by 2 trained colleagues. We refer to this as a 'panel'.
PAT	Professional Activity Table

PSF	UK Professional Standards Framework

"The AFHEA pathway for Doctoral Researchers offered me an opportunity to further develop my professional skills and become more visible within the UK Higher education sector and internationally. I felt extremely proud and pleased when I found that my application was successful!!"

Rebecca Yusuf
Henley Business School