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# Supporting Statement Guidance and Template for Referees

**Queen’s Merit Award**

January 2024

**Fellowship - Guidance for Referees**

Thank you for agreeing to provide a Supporting Statement required to verify and endorse an application for Fellowship. This guidance and the associated template have been designed to help you structure your Supporting Statement to provide the information required by the Queen’s Merit Award (QMA), as explained below. The template is included at the end of this document for information, please return this template to the applicant.

**What is the function of the Supporting Statement?**

Please note that a referee statement supporting an application for Fellowship is not the same as a job application or promotion reference. The award of Fellowship is based on peer recognition of professional practice and as such you are being asked to verify and endorse this application as a valued peer who has expertise in teaching and learning in higher education (HE).

During the Fellowship review process, the independent Supporting Statements provided by the referees will be used to confirm that the application presents a fair and accurate reflection of the applicant’s higher education practice.

**Am I the right person to provide a Supporting Statement for the applicant?**

You need to have current or recent experience of working in higher education and to be familiar with the PSF 2023; for example, as a holder of one of the four categories of Fellowship, although this is not essential.

You will have worked closely with the applicant, have first-hand knowledge of their HE professional practice and will be able to verify and endorse the applicant’s effective and inclusive practice within the context in which they teach and support learning. You should be able to confirm that the applicant has represented their practice accurately and provide your opinion that they demonstrate the Descriptor 2 criteria of the **Professional Standards Framework for teaching and supporting learning in higher education** (PSF 2023).

The application for Fellowship is based on current and recent HE practice (usually within the last 3 years), it is important that you are familiar with their recent practice. You are required in the template to indicate how long you have worked together.

Please note that the Supporting Statement for applications for Fellowship should reflect professional relationships, i.e. not be from family members or based on personal friendships. The statement will be your independent and authentic account to verify and endorse the application.

If you consider, having read this guidance that you are not able to give a Supporting Statement then you should decline the request.

**Higher education – eligibility for Fellowship (D2)**The PSF 2023 sets out the professional standards for higher education (HE). All the experience and evidence included in an application for Fellowship must relate to teaching and/or support for learning practice related to higher education provision such as:

+ level 4 or above within the [**Framework for Higher Education Qualifications**](https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/qualifications-and-credit-frameworks)

[**(FHEQ)** in](https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/qualifications-and-credit-frameworks) England, Wales and Northern Ireland, o[r **equivalent**;](https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/eligibility-advance-he-fellowship)

+ level 7 or above within the [**Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework**](https://scqf.org.uk/)

[**(SCQF)** in](https://scqf.org.uk/) Scotland on the Framework for Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions (FQHEIS) or [**equivalent**;](https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/eligibility-hea-fellowship)

+ level 5 or above of the [**European Qualifications Framework**;](https://europa.eu/europass/en/europass-tools/european-qualifications-framework)

+ first cycle or above of the [**Qualifications Framework in the European Higher Education Area** (](http://www.ehea.info/page-qualification-frameworks)QF-EHEA);

+ level 5 or above of th[e **Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)**](https://www.aqf.edu.au/) or [**equivalent**;](https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/eligibility-hea-fellowship)

+ level 5 or above of th[e **New Zealand Qualification Framework**](https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/qualifications-standards/) or [**equivalent**](https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/eligibility-advance-he-fellowship)

+ 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**](https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/eligibility-advance-he-fellowship) for academic and learning support staff may also be considered as evidence equivalent to the higher education frameworks.

Evidence required for Descriptor 2

Descriptor 2 requires evidence of effective and inclusive practice for all 15 PSF 2023 Dimensions

# Descriptor 2 is suitable for individuals whose practice with learners has breadth and depth, enabling them to evidence all Dimensions. Effectiveness of practice in teaching and/or support of high-quality learning is demonstrated through evidence of:

# D2.1: use of all five Professional Values

# D2.2: application of all five forms of Core Knowledge

# D2.3: effective and inclusive practice in all five Areas of Activity

Evidencing the Areas of Activity

There are five Areas of Activity (A1-5); the diverse range of practices, approaches and tasks that are undertaken when teaching and / or supporting high quality learning.

For Descriptor 2.3 (Fellowship) applicants need to provide evidence of **effective and inclusive practice** in all five Areas of Activity:

**In their CONTEXT demonstrate that you:**

+ **A1**: design and plan learning activities and/or programmes

+ **A2**: teach and/or support learning through appropriate approaches and environments.

+ **A3**: assess and give feedback for learning

+ **A4**: support and guide learners

+ **A5**: enhance practice through own continuing professional development.

Evidencing Professional Values

There are five Professional Values; important principles, ethics and beliefs that influence and guide the practice of those who teach and / or support learning in higher education.

For Descriptor 2.1 (Fellowship) they need to provide evidence that shows how they use all five Professional Values.

For the five Professional Values listed below, **‘In their CONTEXT, show how they:**

+ **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.

Evidencing Core Knowledge

PSF 2023 Dimensions include five forms of Core Knowledge (K1-5); information and ways of knowing, influenced by context, applied to practice in teaching and / or supporting high- quality learning in higher education, including practice-based, disciplinary, professional and indigenous forms of knowledge.

For **Descriptor 2.2** (Fellowship) they need to provide evidence that shows how they apply all five forms of Core Knowledge in their practice.

**In their CONTEXT, they should have applied 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.

**Preparing to write your Supporting Statement**

The applicant needs to first provide you with their completed application. Please read this account **before** you begin to write your Supporting Statement to verify its accuracy.

**Format of the Supporting Statement**

A template is provided for you below to complete your Supporting Statement.

In association with the Descriptor 2 criteria of the PSF 2023, as a guide, you should comment on the following in your Supporting Statement:

+your own personal experience of the applicant’s recent and effective HE practice.

+if you have been involved in peer observation of the applicant’s teaching and/or

support of learning, please draw on relevant examples from this.

+any inclusive practice and/or contribution to developments by the applicant in teaching and/or supporting learning within their context as appropriate.

+your perspective on the practical examples provided within the application to

illustrate the Fellowship requirements.

If English is not your first language and you are not able to provide the Supporting Statement in English, CED will accept a certified English translation of your statement. It is your responsibility to provide the certified translation for the applicant and you will be required to agree and accept the Declaration in the Supporting Statement Template upon completion.

**Quality Assurance Process**

As part of the process, you will be asked to confirm that you have written the Supporting Statement yourself and that the information you have provided has been written specifically for this applicant.

As part of CED’s ongoing quality assurance process, we routinely check Supporting Statements for individual authenticity.

If the professional integrity of the Supporting Statement is in question, the statement will not be accepted.

**Should you have any further questions regarding your suitability to be a referee for this applicant or regarding the content or suitability of the application, please feel free to contact the QMA team at qma@qub.ac.uk**

# Fellowship

**Supporting Statement Template**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Your Name |  |
| Applicant Name |  |
| Your institution/organisation/other |  |
| Your current role |  |
| Email address |  |
| Your Fellowship status (if appropriate) |  |
| Relationship to Applicant |  |
| How long have you worked with the applicant (insert dates) |  |
| Declaration | In submitting your Supporting Statement, you are confirming that the applicant’s submission relates to their higher education professional practice and that  your statement is your own work and has been written specifically for this applicant. If the professional integrity of the Supporting Statement is in question it will not be accepted.    I confirm that I have read and agree with the declaration above:        **Date:** |

**A single page statement will normally be sufficient for this category of Fellowship.**

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