

GOLD D3 Senior Fellow - Guidance for Referees writing a supporting statement

IMPORTANT INFORMATION – Please read before using this guide

This Guidance document is only for referees that are providing supporting statements for candidates using the Professional Standards Framework (PSF) 2023 and who enrolled onto our GOLD scheme **after** 1st September 2024.

If they enrolled onto the GOLD scheme before 11.59pm 31st August 2024, they will be developing and submitting an application using the UKPSF 2011 version. There is a separate Guidance to use, which our team can send to you if you do not have a copy.

If you are or think the candidate you are supporting is to use UKPSF 2011 please **DO NOT** use this PSF 2023 version as it is different from UKPSF 2011. Please confirm with our GOLD team before going ahead via gold@gre.ac.uk.

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1. Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to provide a Supporting Statement required to verify and endorse an application for Senior Fellowship through the Greenwich GOLD scheme. An application for Senior Fellowship requires TWO Supporting Statements; one of which must be provided by the Greenwich GOLD Mentor.

This guidance and the associated SFHEA PSF 2023 Supporting Statement proforma (separate Word document) have been designed to help you structure your Supporting Statement to provide the information required by Advance HE, as explained below. The Supporting Statement proforma is available on the GOLD website. Please read the proforma in conjunction with this referee guidance document before you complete your SFHEA Supporting Statement.

1.1 Advance HE Professional Standards Framework (PSF) transition 2024/25

The GOLD scheme is in a period of transition in 2024/2025 as we move from using UKPSF 2011 to the new PSF 2023. This guidance is for those who are supporting a candidate **using PSF 2023 only**. If the candidate sent their Registration of Intent (RoI) form to the GOLD team and enrolled onto the GOLD scheme *before* 31st August 2024, they will be continuing to use UKPSF 2011 and will have their GOLD applications reviewed using UKPSF 2011. All candidates in this existing group have been contacted by the GOLD team to remind them that they should **only use UKPSF 2011** versions of the Mentee Development workshop resources, handbooks, application forms and supporting statements etc.

If you are supporting a candidate on UKPSF 2011 you need to email GOLD@greenwich.ac.uk and request a copy of the **SFHEA Guidance for referees UKPSF 2011**. Please do not refer to this Handbook as the new PSF 2023 is different to the previous UKPSF 2011 version.

All candidates who register onto the GOLD scheme from **1st September 2024** onwards will all be working on PSF 2023 only and will have their applications reviewed using this new version. To avoid confusion and to maintain version control the GOLD website now (September 2024) only contains PSF 2023 versions of all documents and guides. If you have a UKPSF 2011 mentee please remind them that they should not be using the GOLD website (or any other resource bank/website e.g The Advance HE website) as they will have/are likely to have PSF 2023 versions only, which will not apply to them. If you or the mentee you are supporting have any queries, please email GOLD@greenwich.ac.uk ASAP and we can assist you.

2. The function of the supporting statement

Please note that the referee statement supporting an application for Senior Fellowship is not the same as a job application or promotion reference. The award of Senior 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 Senior Fellowship review process, both independent Supporting Statements will be used to confirm that the application presents a fair and accurate reflection of the applicant's higher education practice.

2.1 Requirements for referees

Two supporting statements are required for a D3 Senior Fellowship Application. To be eligible to provide a supporting statement you must:

- Have current experience of working in higher education
- Be familiar with the PSF 2023
- Have current first-hand knowledge of the candidate's professional practice

Having worked closely with the candidate, you should have first-hand knowledge of their HE professional practice and be in a position to verify and endorse their comprehensive understanding and effective practice that provides a basis from which they **lead or influence those who teach and/or support high-quality learning within their context**. You should be able to confirm that the applicant has represented their practice accurately and provide your opinion that they demonstrate the Descriptor 3 criteria of the **Professional Standards Framework for teaching and supporting learning in higher education** (PSF 2023).

The application for Senior Fellow is based on current and recent HE practice (usually within the last **3-5 years**). If you no longer work with the applicant, it is important that you are familiar with their recent practice. You are required in the Senior Fellow supporting statement proforma to indicate how long you have worked together.

Please note that the Supporting Statements for applications for Senior 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 no longer work with the applicant, it is important that you are familiar with their recent practice.

First supporting statement

The first supporting statement must be provided by the approved GOLD mentor supporting the candidate.

For further guidance about your role as a GOLD mentor, please read our GOLD D3 Senior Fellow – Mentor Handbook PSF 2023, which is available via our GOLD webpage.

Candidate requirements for D3 Senior Fellowship

The PSF 2023 sets out the **professional standards for higher education (HE)**. All the experience and evidence included in an application for Associate Fellowship **must** relate to teaching and/or support for learning practice related to **higher education** provision, such 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;
- level 5 or above of the European Qualifications Framework;
- first cycle or above of the Qualifications Framework in the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA);
- level 5 or above of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) or equivalent;
- level 5 or above of the New Zealand Qualification Framework (NZQF) or equivalent;
- Other equivalent higher education frameworks;

Activity focused on supporting learners within a Higher Education context, providing the learner(s) are enrolled on a Higher Education Qualification may also be considered as evidence equivalent to the higher education frameworks above;

- Foundation Year programmes;
- Pre-sessional English courses for international degree students designed to develop academic skills;
- Professional CPD programmes that are designed to develop and extend existing graduate/postgraduate level skills, knowledge and understanding, e.g. GP training, etc.

Delivery of some **non-accredited continuing professional development** for academic and learning support staff may also be considered as evidence equivalent to the higher education frameworks.

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

In defining what constitutes higher education teaching and learning within different national contexts in order to determine eligibility for fellowship, Advance HE uses **UK ENIC** (UK National Information Centre) for information about global education frameworks and qualifications. Programmes will be defined as HE for the purposes of staff teaching and supporting learning on the programme being eligible for fellowship if they are an integral part of a programme defined as higher education within the context of the country of study. If the candidate you are supporting are a

UK/TNE partner where they are teaching UK levels 1 to 3 i.e. Further Education (FE), this is not appropriate in terms of applying for SFHEA. All evidence and experience mentioned in an application must relate to higher education (foundation degree/degree etc.) in the terms specified above by Advance HE.

3. The Professional Standards Framework 2023 (PSF 2023)

The Professional Standards Framework 2023 (PSF 2023) for teaching and supporting learning in higher education provides a comprehensive set of professional standards and guidelines for all those who are involved in teaching and supporting learning in higher education. The PSF 2023 can be used by individuals to plan their development and evidence their practice to achieve professional recognition, by institutions as a basis for initial and continuing professional development and recognition programmes, and at a national level to improve teaching quality and celebrate success.

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

The Professional Standards Framework (PSF) 2023 consists of two components: **Descriptors and Dimensions**.

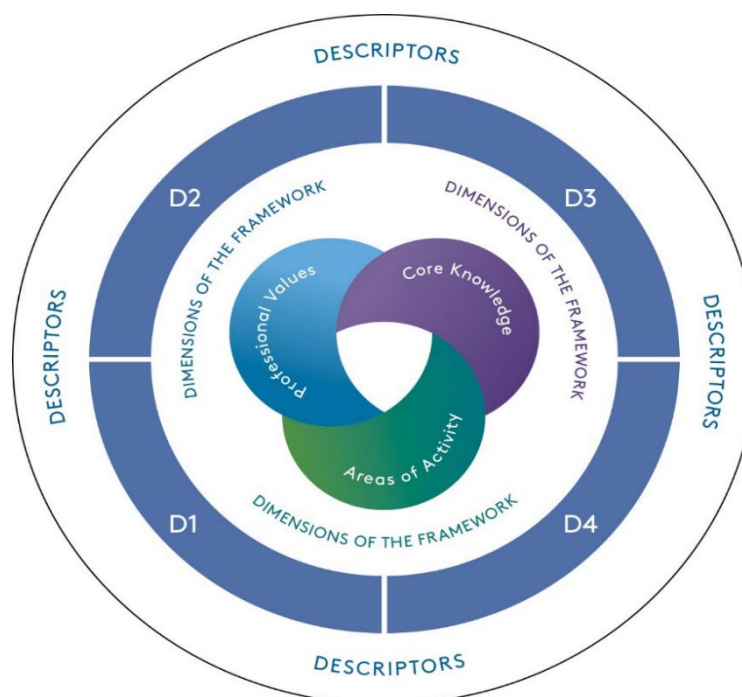


Figure 1: Professional Standards Framework (PSF) 2023

The GOLD D3 Senior Fellow – Mentor handbook PSF 2023 provides guidance related to **Descriptor 3** which is the basis for the award of **Senior Fellowship**.

Descriptor 3 (D3) is suitable for individuals whose practice enables them to evidence **all Dimensions**. Senior Fellowship is the appropriate category of fellowship to professionally recognise individuals from a wide variety of different contexts that influence and/ or lead the practices of others who teach and / or support higher education learning, providing approaches, such as direction, mentoring, management, encouragement and inspiration through knowledge, experience and expertise.

Effectiveness of practice is demonstrated through evidence to meet the **three Descriptor 3 criteria statements, D3.1, D3.2 and D3.3**, which are the basis for the award of Senior Fellowship. These criteria statements incorporate all 15 Dimensions as shown in Figure 2 below.

To be awarded Senior Fellowship, individuals must evidence that their effective and inclusive practice meets the following three Descriptor 3 criteria statements.

D3 is suitable for individuals whose comprehensive understanding and effective practice provides a basis from which they lead or influence those who teach and/or support high-quality learning. Individuals are able to evidence:



Figure 2: PSF 2023 Descriptor 3 showing the three Descriptor 3 criteria statements

D3.1, D3.2 and D3.3

The **PSF 2023 Dimensions are 15 statements** which inform and describe practice. Essential to professional practice, these Dimensions identify what professionals do to enable high-quality teaching and/or support of learning in higher education.

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

Professional Values (V1-5): underpin all forms of Core Knowledge and Areas of Activity. They are the foundation of professional practice.

Core Knowledge (K1-5): informed by the Professional Values, representing key forms of knowledge required to undertake the Areas of Activity. There are multiple and diverse forms of knowledge which are connected to and shaped by communities and contexts.

Areas of Activity (A1-5): bring together the Professional Values and forms of Core Knowledge, showing the essential activities that support delivery of effective practice.

To achieve Senior Fellowship, candidates need to evidence that their teaching and/or support of learning practice demonstrates the requirements of the three Descriptor 3 (D3) criteria, which are as follows:

Descriptor 3 is suitable for individuals whose **comprehensive understanding** and **effective practice** provides a basis from which they **lead or influence** those who teach and/or support high-quality learning. Individuals are able to evidence:

- **D3.1:** a sustained record of leading or influencing the practice of those who teach and/or support high quality learning
- **D3.2:** practice that is effective, inclusive and integrates all Dimensions
- **D3.3:** practice that extends significantly beyond direct teaching and/or direct support for learning.

Professional Values

V1: respect individual learners and diverse groups of learners

V2: promote engagement in learning and equity of opportunity for all to reach their

potential

V3: use scholarship, or research, or professional learning, or other evidence-informed approaches as a basis for effective practice

V4: respond to the wider context in which higher education operates, recognising implications for practice

V5: collaborate with others to enhance practice.

Core Knowledge

K1: how learners learn, generally and within specific subjects

K2: approaches to teaching and/or supporting learning, appropriate for subjects and level of study

K3: critical evaluation as a basis for effective practice

K4: appropriate use of digital and/or other technologies, and resources for learning

K5: requirements for quality assurance and enhancement, and their implications for practice.

Areas of Activity

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.

Therefore, for the award of Senior Fellow, the applicant must demonstrate that their HE practice evidences all Professional Values, Core Knowledge and Areas of Activity of the PSF 2023 and all Descriptor 3 criteria.

4. Preparing to write your supporting statement

The GOLD candidate needs to first provide you with their GOLD application form, which will include their Reflective Account of Professional Practice (RAPP) and TWO leadership case studies. The word limit for a SFHEA application is 6,000-words. This should be across the RAPP and the case studies. It is recommended that the RAPP is 2500-3000 words in length and the case studies are both around 1000-1500 words.

Please read this account **before** you begin to write your Supporting Statement to verify its accuracy.

4.1 Format of the supporting statement

A GOLD Supporting Statement proforma specifically for Senior Fellow GOLD PSF 2023 candidates is available on the GOLD website.

In association with the Descriptor 3 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;
- your perspective on the practical examples provided within the application to illustrate the requirements of Senior Fellow, focusing on the way(s) in which the applicant has **effectively influenced** or **led other colleagues' HE practice**;

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5. After completing your supporting statement

Once you have completed the Supporting Statement Template, please return it to your GOLD mentee as a PDF. Your GOLD mentee will include the Supporting Statement in their application and will send it to GOLD with their SFHEA application form.

6. 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 particular GOLD candidate.

As part of GOLD's ongoing quality assurance process GOLD does reserve the right to check Supporting Statements for individual authenticity by means of textual review using plagiarism detection software. If there are any concerns regarding the professional integrity of the Supporting Statement, the statement will not be accepted.

7. Contacting our GOLD team

If you have any queries or questions relating to GOLD Supporting Statements please email GOLD@greenwich.ac.uk and we will be happy to assist you.