

GOLD D2 Fellow -

Referee Guidance for writing a supporting statement

2026/2027

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1. Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to provide a Supporting Statement required to verify and endorse an application for Descriptor 2 (D2) Fellowship through the Advance HE accredited Greenwich GOLD fellowship scheme. An application for D2 Fellowship requires **two Supporting Statements**; one of which must be provided by the candidate's approved GOLD Mentor.

This guidance and the associated GOLD D2 Fellow - Supporting Statement proforma PSF 2023 (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 FHEA Supporting Statement.

2. The function of the supporting statement

Please note that the 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, both the independent Supporting Statements will be used to confirm that the application presents a fair and accurate reflection of the applicant's higher education practice. Writing a supporting statement is to satisfy Advance HE requirements for all fellowship applications to authenticate the practice of the person submitting the application.

2.1 Requirements for referees

Two supporting statements are required for a D2 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 GOLD candidate, you should have first-hand knowledge of their HE professional practice and be in a position to verify and endorse their effective and inclusive practice within the context in which they teach and/or support learning.

You should be able to confirm that the GOLD candidate has represented their practice accurately and you will provide your opinion that they demonstrate the Descriptor 2 criteria (D2.1, D2.2 and D2.3) of the Professional Standards Framework for teaching and/or supporting learning in higher education (PSF 2023).

The application for Fellowship is based on current and recent HE practice (within the last 3 years). Please note that the Supporting Statements 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 authenticate and endorse the application. If you no longer work with the applicant, it is important that you are familiar with their recent practice. In the Fellowship supporting statement proforma you are required to indicate how long you have worked together.

First supporting statement

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

For D2 fellowship there is a requirement for GOLD mentors to conduct a developmental teaching observation. This developmental teaching observation must take place within 12 months of the candidate submitting their application and must be mentioned in the GOLD mentor supporting statement. For further guidance about the GOLD mentor role and the developmental teaching observation, please read our GOLD D2 Fellow – Mentor Handbook PSF 2023, which is available via our GOLD webpage.

The referee providing the second supporting statement is not required to undertake a developmental teaching observation.

3. Candidate requirements for D2 Fellowship

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 (FHEQ) England and Wales or equivalent;
- Level 7 or above within the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) or equivalent;
- 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 or equivalent;
- Level 5 or above of the New Zealand Qualification Framework or equivalent;
- Other equivalent higher education frameworks;
- Activity focused on supporting learners within a Higher Education context, providing the learner(s) are enrolled on a Higher Education Qualification may also be considered as evidence equivalent to the higher education frameworks above;
- Delivery of some [non-accredited continuing professional development for](#) academic and learning support staff may also be considered as evidence equivalent to the higher education frameworks.

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

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

If the GOLD candidate is in 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 FHEA. 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.

4. 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**.

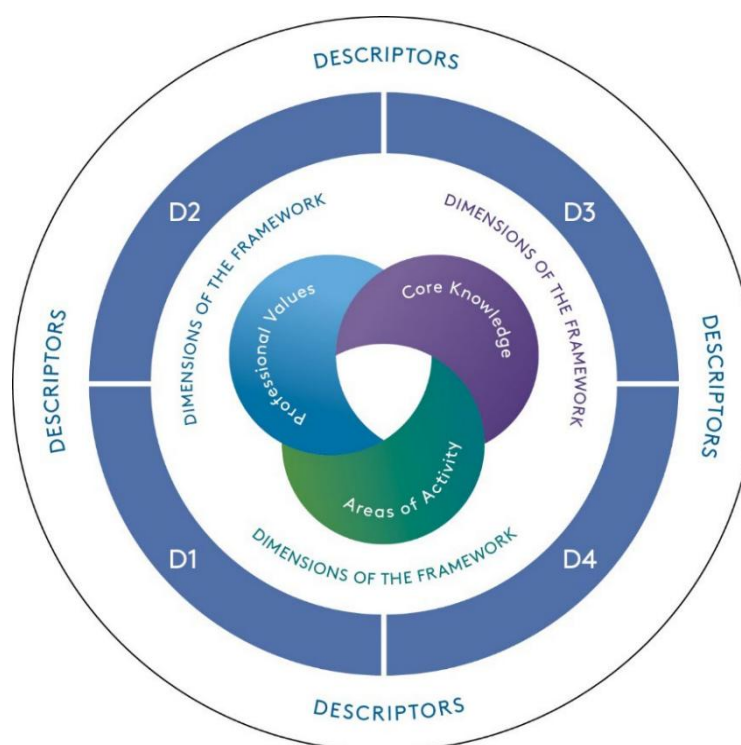


Figure 1: Professional Standards Framework (PSF) 2023

This GOLD Mentor handbook provides guidance related to **Descriptor 2, which** is the basis for the award of **Fellowship**.

Descriptor 2 (D2) is suitable for individuals whose practice enables them to evidence **all Dimensions**.

Effectiveness of practice in teaching and/or support of learning is demonstrated through evidence to meet the **three Descriptor 2 criteria statements, D2.1, D2.2 and D2.3**, which are the basis for the award of Fellowship. These criteria statements incorporate all 15 Dimensions as shown in Figure 2 below.

Descriptor 2 is suitable for individuals whose practice enables them to evidence all Dimensions. Effectiveness of practice in teaching and/or support of learning is demonstrated through evidence of:



Figure 2: PSF 2023 Descriptor 2 showing the three Descriptor 2 criteria statements D2.1, D2.2 and D2.3

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.

Descriptor 2 requires evidence of effective practice for all PSF 2023 Dimensions, **all 15** Dimensions as shown below (and Figure 2 above):

Descriptor 2 is suitable for individuals whose practice enables them to evidence all Dimensions. Effectiveness of practice in teaching and/or support of learning is demonstrated through evidence of:

- **D2.1:** use of all five Professional Values
- **D2.2:** application of all Core Knowledge
- **D2.3:** effective and inclusive practice in all five Areas of Activity

For your information, the Descriptor 2 criteria of the PSF 2023 are set out below:

D2 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

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.

D2.2. Application of all five forms of 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.

D2.3. Effective and inclusive practice in all five 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.

For the award of Fellow, the GOLD candidate must demonstrate how their HE practice provides evidence for all Professional Values, Core Knowledge and Areas of Activity of the PSF 2023.

5. 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). The word limit for this is 3000-words (which includes all in-text citations). The word limit should be shared across the five Areas of Activity in the application.

Please read the application **before** you begin to write your Supporting Statement.

5.1 Format of the supporting statement

The GOLD D2 Fellow - Supporting Statement proforma PSF 2023 is available via our GOLD website.

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;
- 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;
- **For the first referee only (approved GOLD mentor)** - comment on the developmental teaching observation that you undertook, making sure to reference the date that this took place.

6. 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 both supporting statements in their application and submit it along with their FHEA application form to the GOLD team for review.

7. Quality Assurance Processes

During the GOLD mentoring process candidates are reminded of their personal obligation to ensure that standards pertaining to academic integrity are upheld, and that any use of AI when creating their application (including citations and references) is ethical and responsible. If you have any concerns regarding the authenticity and veracity of the application, please contact the GOLD team before writing this Supporting Statement.

As part of assuring QA 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 QA processes 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.

8. 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.