

GOLD D1 Associate Fellow - Referee Guidance for writing a supporting statement PSF 2023

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 Associate Fellowship through the Advance HE accredited Greenwich GOLD fellowship scheme. Only an approved GOLD mentor can write this for their GOLD mentee. This guidance and the associated AFHEA 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 AFHEA supporting statement.

2. The function of the supporting statement

Please note that the referee statement supporting an application for Associate Fellowship is not the same as a job application or promotion reference. The award of Associate 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). Writing a supporting statement is to satisfy Advance HE requirements for all fellowship applications to authenticate the practice of the person submitting the application.

During the Associate Fellowship review process, the independent supporting statement provided by you 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

Only one supporting statement is required for a D1 Associate Fellowship Application. Therefore, you are required to:

- be an approved GOLD mentor actively supporting this candidate;
- have current experience of working in higher education;
- be familiar with the PSF 2023;
- have current first-hand knowledge of the mentees professional practice.

As their GOLD Mentor, you will have worked closely with your mentee and will be in a position to authenticate, 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 applicant has represented their practice accurately and you will provide your professional judgment that they demonstrate the Descriptor 1 criteria (D1.1, D1.2 and D1.3) in full.

The application for Associate Fellowship is based on current and recent HE practice (within the last 3 years). Please note that the supporting statement for applications for Associate

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.

For further guidance about your role as a GOLD mentor, please read our GOLD D1 Associate Fellow - Mentor Handbook PSF 2023, which is available via our webpage.

3. Candidate requirements for D1 Associate Fellowship

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

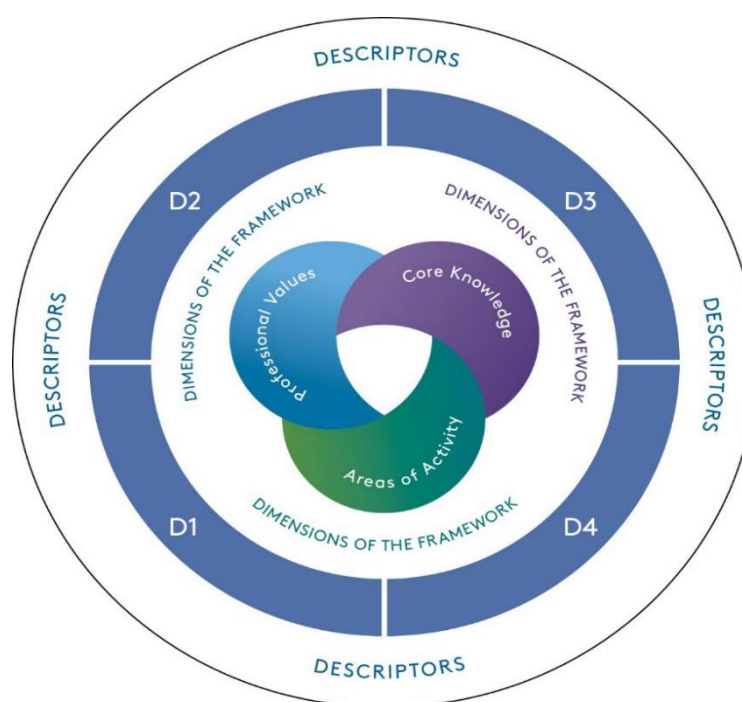


Figure 1: Professional Standards Framework (PSF) 2023

This GOLD Mentor handbook provides guidance related to Descriptor 1, which is the basis for the award of Associate Fellowship.

Effectiveness of practice in teaching and/or support of learning is demonstrated through evidence to meet the three **Descriptor 1 criteria statements, D1.1, D1.2 and D1.3**, which are the basis for the award of Associate Fellowship. These criteria statements incorporate some specified (but not all 15) Dimensions as shown in Figure 2 below:

Descriptor 1 is suitable for individuals whose practice enables them to evidence some Dimensions. Effectiveness of practice in teaching and/or support of learning is demonstrated through evidence of:



Figure 2: PSF 2023 Descriptor 1 showing the three Descriptor 1 criteria statements D1.1, D1.2, and D1.3

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.

For your information, the Descriptor 1 criteria of the PSF 2023 are set out below:

D1 is suitable for individuals whose practice enables them to evidence some Dimensions. Effectiveness of practice in teaching and/or support of learning is demonstrated through evidence of:

D1.1. Use of appropriate Professional Values, including at least V1 and V3

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

D1.2. Application of appropriate Core Knowledge, including at least K1, K2 and K3

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

D1.3. Effective and inclusive practice in at least two of the 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

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 1 only requires evidence of effective practice for specific PSF 2023 Dimensions, not all 15 Dimensions as shown below (and Figure 2 above):

Descriptor 1 is suitable for individuals whose practice enables them to evidence some Dimensions. Effectiveness of practice in teaching and/or support of learning is demonstrated through evidence of:

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

As shown above, the Descriptor 1 criteria statements incorporate specified Dimensions; the 15 PSF 2023 Dimensions are shown in Figure 2.

The mentee you are providing supporting statement for will probably have evidence of their practice that includes some other Dimensions in addition to those that are required for Descriptor 1; they can include evidence of some of these additional Dimensions in an application where they are most relevant if it will enhance and add value to their overall application.

5. Preparing to write your supporting statement

Your GOLD mentee needs to give you their completed GOLD application, which will include their Reflective Account of Professional Practice (RAPP). The word limit for this is 1,400 words. The word limit should be shared across the two Areas of Activity in the RAPP.

Please read the application in full before you write your supporting statement.

5.1 Format of the supporting statement

The GOLD D1 Associate Fellow - Supporting Statement proforma PSF 2023 is available via our GOLD website.

In association with Descriptor 1 criteria of the PSF 2023 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 Associate Fellowship requirements (D1.1, D1.2, D1.3);
- comment about the developmental teaching observation that you undertook, making sure to reference the date that this took place (only for GOLD mentees who are claiming for A2).

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 your supporting statement in their application and submit it along with their AFHEA application form to the GOLD team for review.

7. Quality Assurance Processes

As their GOLD mentor, you will have reminded your mentee 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.