

## Frequently asked questions (FAQs) for Fellowship applications

Application process.....	4
Payment options .....	7
Accredited route.....	9
Programme Leaders .....	10
Further questions.....	10

## About Fellowship

### 1. What is the HEA Fellowship Scheme?

Higher Education Academy Fellowship demonstrates a personal and institutional commitment to professionalism in learning and teaching in higher education. Across four categories, from Associate to Principal, Fellowship provides individuals with recognition of their practice, impact and leadership of learning and teaching. HEA Fellowships are embedded in the UK and have been adopted by increasing numbers of higher education institutions globally.

### 2. What are the different categories of Fellowship?

The Higher Education Academy awards four different categories of Fellowship: Associate Fellowship (AFHEA); Fellowship (FHEA); Senior Fellowship (SFHEA) and Principal Fellowship (PFHEA).

These four categories reflect the wide range of professional practice carried out by individuals who teach and/or support learning in higher education; from those who have a partial role in teaching/supporting learning through to senior professionals with strategic impact on teaching and learning in an organisational, national and/or international setting.

The four categories of Fellowship are awarded on the basis of evidence of personal, professional practice which meets the requirements of one of the four Descriptors of the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF). The UKPSF has been developed as a professional standards framework for the higher education sector that sets out the knowledge, skills and behaviours demonstrated by those teaching and/or supporting higher education learning.

Fellowships are awarded on the basis of a successful and effective demonstration of one of the four UKPSF Descriptors. In deciding which category of Fellowship to apply for at this stage in your career, you will need to determine which of the four Descriptors of the UKPSF is most appropriate to your practice and professional experience:

### **Associate Fellow (AFHEA)**

If your professional role typically includes at least some teaching and/or learning support responsibilities, in applying for Associate Fellowship you will present an understanding of specific aspects of effective teaching, learning support methods and student learning. A useful document for individuals working in a learning support role can be [found here](#).

### **Fellow (FHEA)**

You are able to provide evidence in a substantive teaching and supporting learning role and can demonstrate a broad understanding of effective approaches to learning and teaching support as a key contribution to high quality student learning.

### **Senior Fellow (SFHEA)**

You may be an experienced member of staff able to demonstrate impact and influence on other colleagues through, for example, responsibility for leading, managing or organising programmes, subjects and/or disciplinary areas. You will also be able to demonstrate a thorough understanding of effective approaches to teaching and learning support as a key contribution to high quality student learning.

### **Principal Fellow (PFHEA)**

If you can demonstrate a sustained record of effective strategic leadership in academic practice and development and you are highly experienced with wide-ranging strategic leadership responsibilities in connection with key aspects of teaching and supporting learning.

## **3. Is Fellowship right for me?**

If you are an individual working within HE, are involved in teaching and/or supporting learning with students at the appropriate HE level then you are eligible to apply for Fellowship. All the experience and evidence included in your application must relate to HE 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);
- 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;
- level 5 or above of the New Zealand Qualification Framework;
- 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 (see standards listed above), may also be considered as evidence equivalent to the higher education frameworks;
- delivery of non-accredited continuing professional development for academic and learning support staff may also be considered as evidence equivalent to the higher education academic frameworks.

## **4. What are the benefits of Fellowship?**

Fellowship brings a range of benefits:

- Consolidates personal development and evidence of professional practice in your higher education career;

- Demonstrates commitment to teaching, learning and the student experience, through engagement in a practical process that encourages research, reflection and development;
- For individuals, to identify their expertise with the entitlement to use post-nominal letters (AFHEA, FHEA, SFHEA and PFHEA);
- Provides a valuable measure of success and is increasingly recognised by institutions;
- Fellowship is increasingly sought by employers across the education sector as a condition of appointment and promotion;
- Provides institutional assurance that Fellowships are an important indicator that your institution is fully aligned with UKPSF practice and a badge of assured quality throughout your institution.

## 5. How do I apply for Fellowship?

There are two routes to Fellowship:

- Route 1 is via a direct application to the HEA;
- Route 2 is through a HEA accredited institutional programme, this could be a taught programme such as a PG Cert in Learning and Teaching in HE (LTHE) or an institutional CPD programme.

## 6. How much experience qualifies me for certain Fellowship categories? How long should I have been teaching or supporting learning?

We don't specify a timescale for what constitutes an early career or experienced academic. It very much depends on the breadth, depth and range of experience the individual has in higher education teaching and learning. The depth and range will dictate which category of Fellowship you should aim for.

If, after reading through the UKPSF and guidance documents you are unsure about which is the right category of HEA Fellowship for you then please email [fellowship@heacademy.ac.uk](mailto:fellowship@heacademy.ac.uk) to schedule in a phone call with a member of the Fellowship Team.

## 7. What is the Professional Standards Framework?

The Professional Standards Framework (PSF) provides a developmental model through four categories (Descriptors 1-4), reflecting those individuals who have a partial role in teaching/supporting learning through to senior professionals with strategic impact on teaching and learning in an organisational, national and/or international setting.

The four descriptors are underpinned by the Dimensions of the Framework:

- Areas of Activity which describes what a teaching and learning professional does;
- Core Knowledge outlines what they need to know to carry out the activities;
- Professional Values outlines the manner in which they should carry out their activity.

The UKPSF forms the basis of the concept of Professional Recognition against each of the four Descriptors as:

- Descriptor 1 – Associate Fellow (AFHEA)
- Descriptor 2 – Fellow (FHEA)
- Descriptor 3 – Senior Fellow (SFHEA)
- Descriptor 4 – Principal Fellow (PFHEA)

## Application process

### 8. How do I submit my application?

All direct applicants are asked to register with the HEA's portal [MyAcademy](#). Once you have registered you will be able to click on 'Fellowship Online' within the welcome menu and then click on 'Apply for Fellowship on the basis of your experience'. All of the guidance documentation is available within the portal to assist you in working through the application. In addition, the system allows you to save your progress so you will be able to work on your application over time. Normally, all applications for Fellowship must be made in English.

### 9. Can I apply in a language other than English?

All applications for HEA Fellowship including accompanying supporting statement must be written in English and the HEA is unable to accept applications/supporting statements written in another language. Where an application/supporting statement has been translated into English prior to submission to the HEA, please also provide the certification of translation.

### 10. Who do I contact if I am having issues signing into MyAcademy?

If you have forgotten your password please click on the 'Forgotten your password?' link at the bottom of the MyAcademy registration page but if this does not work please email [fellowship@heacademy.ac.uk](mailto:fellowship@heacademy.ac.uk) and a member of the Fellowship team will assist in re-setting your password.

### 11. What does the application consist of?

The application is an online process which requires you to submit a reflective account of practice plus two references (AFHEA, FHEA & SFHEA) from colleagues who know and can verify your practice. For PFHEA applications, three advocate statements are required in place of references.

### 12. What are the word limits for the different descriptors?

Associate Fellow (AFHEA)	1,400 words
Fellow (FHEA)	3,000 words
Senior Fellow (SFHEA)	6,000 words
Principal Fellow (PFHEA)	7,000 words

### 13. Is there any flexibility with the word count?

Unfortunately we have to ensure that all applicants are provided with the same opportunity and therefore the system will only allow a slight variance in the word counts to ensure additional spacing but the restrictions have been implemented to ensure that all applicants have a fair chance in their submissions. Please note that all word counts must include academic references.

### 14. How much does it cost to apply?

Category	HEA Subscriber	Non-Subscriber
Associate Fellow (AFHEA)	£100	£200
Fellow (FHEA)	£200	£400
Senior Fellow (SFHEA)	£300	£600
Principal Fellow (PFHEA)	£500	£1,000

### **15. How do I know if my institution subscribes to the HEA?**

The HEA holds a full record of current subscribing institutions on the [HEA website](#) but if you have any queries about whether your institution is a subscriber please contact [fellowship@heacademy.ac.uk](mailto:fellowship@heacademy.ac.uk).

### **16. As a PhD student, am I still eligible for the subscriber rate?**

Definition of employment for professional recognition purposes:

Employment status at an institution is based on the Higher Education Statistical Agency (HESA) definition of employment. An individual who is returned in the HESA return is deemed to be employed. Staff with zero hours contracts, such as Associate Lecturers, are eligible to apply for HEA Fellowship if their employment contract is with a subscribing institution. The only exception to these regulations relates to postgraduates who teach as Associate Lecturers or as part of their PhD studentship/bursary. These individuals are deemed to be employed by the institution as they are contracted to deliver teaching but may not necessarily be paid for their work.

Work place educators, who teach or support the learning of HE students (and are eligible for recognition as set out above) but whose primary employer is not an HE Provider, are eligible to gain HEA Fellowship but will be liable for an additional fee to the HEA at the point of recognition. For example, an NHS Consultant supporting medical students at X University completes a Postgraduate Certificate in Health Care Education and meets the requirements for recognition at D2. At the point of recognition, the individual will be contacted by the HEA to request the additional fee. On payment of the fee Fellowship will be awarded.

If you are unsure about the employment status of any staff/participants on HEA accredited provision within your institution, the HEA recommends that the HR Department at your institution should be consulted in line with the definitions provided above.

### **17. Where can I find the guidance notes for my application?**

You can request a supporting guidance pack on each of the Fellowship categories from the [HEA website](#) or from the [Fellowship Resources webpage](#).

### **18. Can I use diagrams and images within my application?**

Please use plain text only as the application form is not formatted to accept tables/charts or diagrams. In addition please refrain from using square brackets within your application.

### **19. Where do I list my academic references and what should they include?**

References should be listed at the end of the application or at the end of each Section. There is no separate area to write your references, apart from within the Principal Fellowship application. Please note that academic references will be included in the overall word count.

### **20. What should my referees include within my personal references?**

All references must include verifiable information and should be written on the referee template provided within the [Supporting Statement Guidance](#) for referees. Please ensure that your referee has provided contact details as we may contact them directly to clarify points in your reference.

### 21. Why can't I upload my references?

You will not be able to upload a document if it exceeds 1.5mb in size. You will need to amend the document to reduce its size. Documents can sometimes go over this size if they include icons and pictures or if they are in JPEG format. Please upload your reference as a PDF rather than JPEG.

### 22. How can I check if my application has been submitted successfully?

At the end of the application process if you have selected 'submit your application' you will see a message on screen informing you that your application will be reviewed and you will no longer be able to edit it. Your application status will also change from 'draft' to 'awaiting payment'. The fee for your application will need to be paid before your application is allocated to the review panel. You can view your recognition status on the 'My Recognition' page.

### 23. Can I download a copy of my application?

Once you have submitted your application, you can download a copy from your 'My Fellowship' page. Next to your application status there will be a button so that you can click 'Download PDF' to obtain a copy of your application.

### 24. Who will review my application?

Panels are made up of highly experienced accreditors from a range of disciplines. Accreditors are selected for their experience of external review, their understanding of the UKPSF, as well as for their knowledge and experience of learning and teaching in higher education.

### 25. How can I check what stage my application is at?

Within Fellowship Online in MyAcademy, click on '[My Fellowship](#)'. Here you will see a summary of your applications from previous submissions to those currently in progress. The third column 'status' summarises what stage an application has reached:

- **Draft** – your application is still in draft form and a final version is yet to be submitted.
- **Awaiting Payment** – there is payment due against the application before it can be processed. You will need to click on the link in the grid under 'Payment' to be directed to a payment screen. Should this link be unavailable (for example if the payment was previously declined) payment can still be made via the Finance & Payment section on the central tab of MyAcademy.  
Click on '[Make a Payment](#)' then follow the instructions on screen.
- **Applicant** – this applies to the direct application route and means your application has been paid for and is waiting to be processed and assigned to a panel.
- **Allocated to panel** – this applies to the direct application route and means the application has been assigned to a panel ready for review.
- **Active** – Fellowship has been awarded. You will receive an email informing you that your application has been successful with instructions on how to download your certificate.
- **Pending** – application is in progress but fellowship has not yet been obtained.
- **Referred** – this applies to the direct application route. Additional evidence is required by the review panel before fellowship can be awarded. You will be contacted directly via email with detailed feedback on the additional evidence required by the panel.
- **Attention required** – the application will be put on hold pending review by a member of the fellowship team. This may be for various reasons such as an outstanding fee. The

fellowship team will resolve this and contact you directly. There is no further action you can take at this stage.

- **Withdrawn** – an application can be withdrawn for various reasons, for instance if the status of an application has been left as 'Incomplete' for over two years. Also, if an application is unsuccessful after a resubmission, it will be withdrawn.

## 26. What happens if my submission is not successful?

If your submission is unsuccessful, you will be given detailed feedback by the panel that will support and enable you to resubmit your application once more without further payment. You will have one month to revise and resubmit your application. If upon resubmission you are unsuccessful, you will need to re-apply and this will incur a further cost.

## Payment options

### 27. I'm on MyAcademy but where do I go to pay?

Click on [Fellowship Online](#) on the top tab and then click on [My Fellowship](#) on the left-hand menu. The page will show your current application and the status should say 'awaiting payment'. Click on the 'Pay Now' button at the side and follow the instructions on screen.

### 28. Why do I need a 'Bill to' address?

There will be a payment due against your application when applying via the direct application route or in some instances if applying via the accredited provision route (in order for us to raise an invoice) for the payment, we require a 'Bill to' address. As the payment is owed by you as an individual and not your organisation, a 'Bill to' address ensures that confidential information is not sent to the wrong place. To add a 'Bill to' address or to edit your current details click on 'Address details' in [My Profile](#). The address details needs to reflect the address where your payment card is registered and if your institution is paying on your behalf please ensure that this address corresponds to the institution.

### 29. My institution is paying for me, what do I do?

You will need to obtain a reference number on MyAcademy. Click on to 'Pay now' in [My Fellowship](#) and follow the screens through until you select an option that says 'someone is paying on my behalf'. This will generate a reference number which you should pass on to your institution. Someone at your institution will then log on to MyAcademy and pay using that reference number. Please note the reference number is not the same as your application reference number which will commence with 'PR'.

### 30. Do I have to make payment via Fellowship Online, or can I contact the team to do this?

If you apply via Fellowship Online you will be required to make payment via the online system. Please note that this will only accept credit/debit card. If you are having any issues in paying for your application through the online system please contact [fellowship@heacademy.ac.uk](mailto:fellowship@heacademy.ac.uk) and a member of the team will work with you to resolve the payment element of the process.

### 31. If I am a UK resident, can I claim tax relief on my application fee?

You can claim tax on fees or subscriptions you pay to some approved professional organisations but only if you must have membership to do your job or it's helpful for your

work. You can't claim tax back on fees or subscriptions you've paid to professional organisations not approved by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC), or for life membership subscriptions; or fees or subscriptions you haven't paid for yourself. The Higher Education Academy is on the approved list of professional organisations and learned societies so if you are self-employed or if you paid your application fee personally you will be able to claim tax relief. Please see the [HM Revenue & Customs website](#) for further details.

### **32. If I am successful, what personal details are displayed on my certificate?**

You will be prompted to input your name for inclusion on your certificate.

### **33. Why can't I find my certificate in MyAcademy?**

Please check you have logged on to My Academy using the email address provided in the confirmation email sent to you. If you did not receive a confirmation email please send a message to [fellowship@heacademy.ac.uk](mailto:fellowship@heacademy.ac.uk) and a member of the team will send you a copy of the original email.

For individuals who have applied for Fellowship via the accredited provision route, this is the email address that the programme leader will have used when adding you to a course or institutional CPD provision.

If you already hold a MyAcademy account with a different email address and you use this email address to log on to MyAcademy it will not correspond to the fellowship record we have for you on our system. If you realise that you have two records please contact [fellowship@heacademy.ac.uk](mailto:fellowship@heacademy.ac.uk) and we will merge the accounts on your behalf. If you continue to have problems logging on, please contact the fellowship team on +44 (0)1904 717530 or [fellowship@heacademy.ac.uk](mailto:fellowship@heacademy.ac.uk).

### **34. I'm having trouble downloading my certificate.**

You may need to update your browser with the latest version in order to download your certificate. Sometimes it can take a few minutes once you have updated your browser for the certificate to appear and you may need to refresh your screen but if you continue to have issues please contact [fellowship@heacademy.ac.uk](mailto:fellowship@heacademy.ac.uk).

### **35. What should I do if I can't find my organisation?**

When adding an employing organisation to your record you will be asked to search for it by name. Please ensure it has the correct spelling as the system will only find exact matches to our database entries.

When searching for your institution, sometimes it is easier to search for 'Poppleton' rather than 'University of Poppleton' as the system will then show you options that you can choose from to save you time. If the system cannot find the organisation, an option 'Organisation' not found? will appear and you will be invited to send us its name. The Fellowship team at the HEA will then check the database to avoid a duplicate organisation being created, before adding it into the system records. When doing this they will add the organisation to your record.

## Accredited route

### **36. How do I know if my institution has an accredited programme?**

Please contact [accreditation@heacademy.ac.uk](mailto:accreditation@heacademy.ac.uk) and a member of the Accreditation team can assist in providing details of your institutions programme.

### **37. How do I know who is the contact within my institution to advise me about the accredited route?**

Email [accreditation@heacademy.ac.uk](mailto:accreditation@heacademy.ac.uk) and a member of the team will introduce you to the Programme Leader within your institution.

### **38. I can't find an option to apply for Fellowship on the basis of completing an accredited programme as an individual.**

All applications for Fellowship via the accredited route are now made by the programme leader/administrator at the institution where you completed your course. Please contact the programme leader and they will be able to add you on to [MyAcademy](#) to confer your fellowship with us. Please contact the accreditation team on [accreditation@heacademy.ac.uk](mailto:accreditation@heacademy.ac.uk) if you cannot find contact details for your programme leader.

### **39. Do I have to use my institutional scheme or can I apply through the direct application route?**

The HEA advises individuals to explore whether their institution has an appropriate programme/scheme accredited by the HEA which would enable them to achieve an appropriate category of Fellowship. This route to Fellowship will provide institutional support through programmes and schemes which have been designed to articulate with internal structures and priorities. For example, as part of the probation process, many institutions require early career staff to undertake a formal qualification such as a Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching in HE/Academic Practice which has been designed to also lead to HEA Fellowship. Equally, promotional pathways may embed both HEA Fellowship and additional internal elements, which are not part of a direct application process.

Consequently, the HEA policy is to recommend that where institutional provision is accredited, individuals should participate in an appropriate programme/scheme at their own institution, to ensure that any specific contractual arrangements are met and that successful Fellows become part of an established institutional community of practice within their institution. The HEA is not in a position, however, to deny an individual application, nor compel an individual to participate in an institutional scheme and the choice remains that of the individual. Please note that where an institution chooses to make participation in an institutional programme or scheme contractual, any staff wishing to apply directly to the HEA should do so using a personal email address and will be expected to pay a full fee for the application; i.e. the fee will not be subsidised by the institutional subscription

## Programme Leaders

### **40. I am a programme leader/administrator and would like to add completers on to a course, what do I need to do?**

You will need to apply to be a programme administrator first. Once you have applied to be a programme administrator through the MyAcademy system, we will request approval from the institutional contact where you work. Once this has been approved you will be able to add completers on to a course. [Guidance notes for adding completers on to a course can be found here.](#)

### **41. I am a programme leader/administrator and have added a completer to the wrong course/used the wrong start date for the course, what can I do?**

If you have made any errors whilst inputting an individual's details, please contact the fellowship team and we will amend the data accordingly.

### **42. What will happen if I add a completer who has already been awarded recognition at the same category as the accredited course, or a different category? I may not be aware of whether they already have fellowship?**

If an application is received for an individual who has already been awarded fellowship, the individual will be added as a completer to the course or CPD scheme and their details updated to reflect their current fellowship.

## Further questions

### **43. What if I have more questions?**

If you cannot find the information you need or require further assistance, please email [fellowship@heacademy.ac.uk](mailto:fellowship@heacademy.ac.uk) and one of our team will be able to assist you. You can also call us on (+44) 01904 717530.