Professional Educational Excellence Recognition Scheme (PEERS)

Resource for colleagues supporting applicants

Experiential Route Supporting HEA Fellowship applicants

2019
Introduction

This handbook is designed for colleagues who will be supporting other colleagues in their department or school with their applications for HEA fellowship through PEERS. It contains guidance and further resources to help you to think about what support you might provide and how you can provide it.

In the first instance you should attend the face-to-face workshop, ‘Supporting HEA Fellowship applicants’. Dates and the booking form are available on the PEERS website (www.le.ac.uk/peers).

You should also re-visit the ‘PEERS Handbook for Applicants, Mentors and Referees’ and familiarise yourself with the resources on the PEERS website that your colleagues can use.

If you still have questions, please contact the PEERS team at peers@le.ac.uk for further advice and guidance.

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www.le.ac.uk/peers
What are the benefits of supporting colleagues with their applications?

There are a number of benefits of supporting colleagues with their HEA Fellowship application including:

- Fostering deeper relationships with colleagues within and across departments.
- Learning from other people’s teaching practice which may give you some ideas to adapt for your own practice.
- Contributing to your continuing professional development in learning and teaching.
- If you are considering applying for Senior Fellowship in the future, this type of support could count towards your evidence.
- For those that already hold Senior Fellowship, supporting colleagues in this way can showcase your ongoing ‘good standing’ and continuing engagement with the UKPSF.

Is there a set process I have to follow when supporting colleagues?

The short answer is no. You should approach this support in your own way taking into account your own preferences, your existing workload and the needs of the colleagues you will be supporting. You may, for example, look to offer your support to a group of colleagues working collaboratively rather than individually. This handbook contains some useful ideas that you may want to use and if you would like to know how others have approached this type of support, there are some case studies provided at the end of this handbook.

What should applicants already know?

If you choose to offer your support to colleagues, you should expect them to have:

- Familiarised themselves with the UKPSF Dimensions and Descriptors.
- Attended a PEERS Overview session, during which they should have identified the most appropriate category of Fellowship (Associate Fellow, Fellow, Senior Fellow) that describes their teaching experience and role.
- Consulted the appropriate guidance in the ‘PEERS Handbook for Applicants, Mentors and Referees’.
• Understood the application requirements for PEERS and have downloaded the appropriate application form from the PEERS website.

All the information and resources provided on the PEERS website are designed to ensure applicants understand the process and requirements for applying for an HEA Fellowship. You should NOT be expected to provide this core information as part of the support you offer. Please ensure that you direct them to a PEERS Overview session where they can learn about the application process and requirements.

**What support might I offer?**

While it is ultimately your decision what support you provide to your colleagues, the following guidance might help you to consider what you might do and should not do when offering your help:

**Your support might include:**

- Having an initial discussion with colleagues (individually or as a group) to follow up on any issues emerging from attending the PEERS Overview session.
- Helping a colleague understand what the UKPSF means in relation to their own practice focusing on the Descriptor Criteria and the Dimensions of Practice. Do direct colleagues to Advance HE’s Guidance on the UKPSF that can be found in the ‘PEERS Handbook for Applicants, Mentors and Referees’.
- Supporting a colleague in understanding and planning how to approach the PEERS application drawing on your own experience of applying.
- Offering to peer observe their teaching practice to provide feedback which highlights the strengths of your colleague’s practice and areas for development.
- **Reading and reviewing up to two drafts** of a Fellowship application, or parts of an application. Colleagues are likely to find this the most valuable guidance you can offer. Draw on your experience of reviewing the mock applications at the PEERS workshop for mentors.
- Agreeing to act as one of the Referees to support a colleague’s Fellowship application.
Your support should NOT include:

- Providing colleagues with **core information about Fellowship** or the PEERS process. Colleagues should access this through the PEERS Overview workshop support and the PEERS website.

- Giving a **definitive judgement** as to whether an application will receive a positive outcome from the PEERS Assessment Panel.

- Advising colleagues that intend to apply for a category of HEA Fellowship that you are not familiar with or currently hold i.e. you should not support colleagues applying for Senior Fellow if you currently have Fellow recognition.

- **Proof-reading a draft application** to correct/edit the text or help with English if this is not their first language. If your colleague(s) need support, they are advised to contact the University's English Language Teaching Unit.

**Reviewing draft applications**

Probably the most useful support you can offer colleagues will be in reviewing their draft application, or sections of an application. In most cases, applicants will probably want some re-assurance that what they are writing is in line with what is expected.

This task can be approached in a number of ways: you might request a copy of the draft to make comments on, either in hard copy or electronically; or you may prefer to discuss the draft application face to face. If you are supporting more than one colleague, you might consider some peer-review of draft applications across the group.

Whichever way you choose to approach this task, there are some general things to look out for in draft applications and you should find the following resources helpful:

1. The [University Accreditation Panels' Assessment Templates](http://www.le.ac.uk/peers) These are the forms used by assessment panels when making judgements about application submissions.

2. The **Frequently Asked Questions list** on the PEERS website, which also includes common reasons for referred applications, such as:
   a. Lack of reflection
   b. Lack of scholarship
   c. Lack of discussion of individual practice
## Suggested checklist for reviewing draft applications

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<th>Questions to consider</th>
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| **Is it a personal account?** | ✓ It is written in the first person?  
✓ It is about their own (personal) practice and experiences? | → Look at the exemplar applications on the PEERS website for writing style. |
| **Is it individual?** | ✓ Is it focused on how they teach/support learning?  
✓ If they are reflecting on collaborative activities, have they emphasised their own role i.e. is it clear what their contribution was? | → Prioritise examples of OWN over collaborative practice.  
→ Be clear what their own role was in collaborative practice. |
| **Is it reflective?** | ✓ Does the account go beyond describing practice? Does it explain:  
 o Why they used a particular teaching strategy or method? (rationale)  
 o How they know it was effective?  
 o What worked, what didn’t work – and why? | → Use the 4-point reflective model:  
 o **What** did you do?  
 o **How** did you do it?  
 o **Why** did you do it that way?  
 o **How do you know it worked?** (What impact did it have on student learning?)  
 Provide the evidence. |
| **Is it scholarly?** | ✓ Does the application show how practice is informed by pedagogic literature?  
✓ Is it clear how the concepts/ideas have been applied? | → Look for subject-specific pedagogic research.  
→ Make it clear how any literature cited has been used to provide a deeper consideration or rationale for practice. |
| **Is it evidence-based?** | ✓ How do they evaluate their practice?  
✓ What evidence do they call upon?  
✓ Has concrete data been included? | → Collect and provide evidence such as: student feedback, evaluations and performance data; feedback from peer observations; and External Examiner’s comments. |
### Questions to consider continued

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<th>What to look for</th>
<th>Suggest to applicants that they…</th>
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<td><strong>Is it aligned to the UKPSF?</strong></td>
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| ✓ Are there lists of Dimension references e.g. (A1, K1, K5, V1, V2) but it is not clear how these cited Dimensions are being demonstrated?  
✓ Are all appropriate Dimensions covered in sufficient depth? | → Avoid long lists of Dimensions at the end of a section (e.g. K1, K2, K3, K4, V1, V3). Instead provide one or two strong examples for each.  
→ Map out where each Dimension is discussed and check for omissions. |
| **Is the account current and sufficient?** | | |
| ✓ Does it cover practice within the last three years?  
✓ If historic practice is referred to, has it been connected to current activities?  
✓ Are the activities too recent so it is hard to evaluate impact? | → Consider more recent examples – so long as impact can be evaluated.  
→ If discussing historic experience, ensure it is fed into how it influences current activities. |
| **Does it meet the category requirements?** | | |
| ✓ Are all the criteria addressed for the category of Fellowship being sought?  
✓ Has the application been completed appropriately? | → Review against UKPSF document and the PEERS Handbook for the category of Fellowship. |

And finally, is there sufficient experience?

- For Associate Fellowship, applicants are informed at the PEERS Overview session and in the PEERS Handbook, that they must have at least a year’s experience in a role which includes 20 hours or more teaching/supporting learning responsibilities in HE.

- For Fellow recognition, applicants need to be an experienced member of staff undertaking 30 hours or more teaching commitments a year and have a minimum of **three years**’ broad-based experience of teaching in HE. Experience in a supporting learning role as a PGR or GTA do not count in this three years’ experience.

If you are in any doubt, please contact the PEERS team at: peers@le.ac.uk for advice.
Supporting Senior Fellowship applicants

N.B. If you intend to support a colleague applying for Senior Fellowship, you should already be a Senior Fellow.

As you will know from your own Senior Fellow application, the requirements for Descriptor 3 are different to those for Descriptors 1 and 2 so also consider the following when supporting colleagues:

- Check that your colleague’s case studies are focused directly on leadership in teaching, particularly Case Study 2 which requires applicants to show how they have influenced other colleagues' teaching practice.
  - If, for example, the applicant is mentoring PhD students, the case study should focus on how they have developed their teaching practice not their research practice.

- Senior Fellow applications must also show that applicants have demonstrated sustained leadership over a period of time. If case studies focus on one example, it should be clear in the reflective account that this example is one of several leadership examples in their teaching and learning practice.

- Ensure that the application remains reflective, i.e. they should demonstrate ‘how’ and ‘why’ they have approached their leadership roles/projects in the way that they have.

- Examples should be drawn from the applicant’s last 3 (and up to 5) years of practice and leadership should be current. At the same time, case studies should be able to discuss the success of practice so applicants need to consider whether they can confidently discuss the impact of projects that are still ongoing or incomplete.
Case Studies – Supporting HEA Fellowship applicants

Access the links below to see some case studies of staff that have supported others with their HEA Fellowship applications. You will see how they approached giving support and what they have learned from the experience.

**Maribel Canto-Lopez, University of Leicester**

**Caroline Turnbull, Edinburgh Napier University**

**Jo Peat, University of Roehampton**

The transcript for Dr Canto-Lopez’s presentation is available in Appendix 1. Transcripts for the other two presentations are available on these YouTube videos.

[www.le.ac.uk/peers](http://www.le.ac.uk/peers)
Useful Resources

All of the following resources can be found on the PEERS website (www.le.ac.uk/peers).

- ‘PEERS Handbook for Applicants, Mentors and References’ is the key resource for everything you need to know about applications for HEA Fellowship.

- Videos on teaching and learning practice – these are short, five-minute introductions to active learning, assessment and feedback and engaging with educational scholarship. There is also a video about how to develop an HEA Fellowship claim.

- The PEERS Talis Reading List provides links to online texts and journals. No-one is expected to read the whole list! It is a list for colleagues to dip into as a starting place if they have not engaged with pedagogic literature before.

- Sample applications - there are samples for each category of Fellowship drawn from several successful applications. They are useful for enabling applicants to see the general style and approach to writing an application.

- Frequently Asked Questions – a useful summary of the common issues and queries that colleagues have when completing their applications. It also includes some of the main reasons why applications are referred the first time.

- University Accreditation Panels’ Assessment Templates – these are the forms used by the panels when assessing Fellowship applications. You will find them helpful to see how panels make their judgements.

- Guidance for writing HEA fellowship references – a useful short video if you are asked to be a referee for a colleague’s Fellowship application.

- Advance HE’s Guidance on UKPSF Dimensions of the Framework – an extended summary of what each of the Dimensions of the UKPSF (the As, Ks and Vs) relate to, with ideas about how they might be evidenced. You will find this guidance in the PEERS Handbook (as an appendix).
APPENDIX 1

Transcript for Dr Maribel Canto-Lopez’s presentation

I am Dr Maribel Canto-Lopez. I am a lecturer at the School of Law in the University of Leicester. I’m also an assessor for the HEA [PEERS] here and I am now a Senior Fellow of the HEA. Having the experience of being an assessor I think placed me in a good situation to know what was asked for from the HEA [Advance HE]. So I thought I had first-hand information of how I could help.

What do you get from supporting colleagues with their HEA fellowship applications?
I have felt a lot of respect, even from people that hierarchically are quite higher up, and you get a satisfaction when they pass. I think also it’s made, even in some subjects, people closer too because when they came to those workshops, they were talking to each other about the same subject. Some of them described what other people were doing. They were helping each other so I think it created a nice sort of ambience about teaching. Now people sometimes come to me with ideas – ‘Maribel what do you think about doing this in teaching?’

I now have the satisfaction to say, ‘I think we’re over the 90% in Law!’ [Percentage of staff in the School with an Academic Teaching Qualification]. We started with quite a low number of people with qualifications so I was given a challenge. Many people know me now because of this. I think as a personal thing it’s quite important, it’s quite rewarding, and it keeps you fresh because you know what other people are doing in teaching, or find out about different ways of teaching. You know what your colleagues are doing so I think it’s quite a good position to be in.

What types of support do you provide?
I offer different things, because colleagues are different. I do workshops: they work very, very well, and it also has the advantage of having many colleagues together so you don’t have to spend that much time. At the same time, we sort of feed from each other, so when I do my workshops we are all sitting at a big massive table. It usually helps if you offer cakes and chocolates – you will have more people coming. But the main thing is when we are discussing what you need in order to write a good application, many people bring ideas that can help other colleagues. Or they realise that they were doing something that has actually some pedagogical implications that they didn’t know before. So I think it helps a lot.

Other people do not like coming to the workshops and they’d rather have one to ones so I have offered that. Over a cappuccino you can fill in the application. What I like to do – either in the one to ones or in the workshops – is to make sure that whoever it is has at least a sort of plan like some bullet points so if it’s [the application] for an Associate Fellow, they have 2 of the areas, or if it’s a Fellow where they have the 5 areas, I want them to have some bullet points to start filling in. I want them to know ‘I can do this’.

What do you look out for in draft applications?
One of the things that they usually lack is examples. So if they are saying, my students are very happy with how I teach, I would say, you need to tell me how because I only have your word. Do you have any feedback from these students, like real feedback? Do you have any numbers, like ‘80% [of students] like how we teach’? Same with when you have been observed by another colleague. So if we have another word [viewpoint] we have another
account of how you teach... So we have your students’ words, and we have other different people in your story – we have your peers for example.

You know you have to make it personal, about yourself, make it individual, reflective – they want to know how you change your teaching. Make it scholarly so have a look at some pedagogical resources and if they are in your own discipline, they will be better for you anyway.

Evidence! Collect evidence. Write down what students say, what colleagues say, have percentages, notes of what you changed, whether people liked it or the marks for that particular thing you teach. Align it with the UKPSF and just make it current. Yes, that’s it!