



UNIVERSITY OF
LEICESTER

Leicester Learning Institute

Professional Educational Excellence Recognition Scheme (**PEERS**)

Experiential Route

Supporting HEA Fellowship applicants



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Introduction

This information pack is designed for people who are, or will be, supporting other colleagues with their applications for HEA fellowship recognition. It contains guidance and further resources to help you think about what support you might provide and how you can provide it. The pack is complimented by:

1. The extensive information about applying for HEA Fellowship provided on the **PEERS website** (www.le.ac.uk/peers)
2. The **face-to-face workshop** 'Supporting HEA Fellowship applicants' that you should attend.

If you have any questions that aren't covered in this pack, please contact the PEERS team at peers@le.ac.uk for further advice and guidance.

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Why should I support colleagues with their applications? What's in it for me?

There are a number of benefits of working with HEA fellowship applicants to consider, including:

- Fostering deeper relationships with colleagues within and across departments
- Learning from other people's teaching practice – that may give you some ideas to adapt for your own practice
- Contributing to your continuing professional and career development in teaching and learning
- If you are considering applying for your own Senior Fellowship recognition, this type of support could count towards evidence of 'leadership' of others
- For those who already have Senior Fellow recognition, supporting staff in this way can showcase your ongoing 'good standing' in teaching and learning leadership

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 by considering your own preferences, your existing workload and time pressures 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 pack contains some useful ideas 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 pack](#) which outline other people's experiences.

What should applicants already know?

You will remember from your own experience of applying for an HEA fellowship that, with the support of the PEERS team, it is the responsibility of applicants to understand the requirements and process for HEA achieving fellowship applications. **If you choose to offer your support to colleagues, you should expect them to have:**

1. Attended a [PEERS Overview workshop](#)
2. Familiarised themselves with the [UKPSF Dimensions and Descriptors](#)
3. Identified the most appropriate fellowship category (Associate Fellow, Fellow, Senior Fellow) of fellowship to apply according to their teaching experience and role
4. Consulted the appropriate [PEERS Handbook](#) related to their appropriate category
5. Understood the [PEERS application requirements](#) for their chosen category, and downloaded the appropriate PEERS application form

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** – if this is requested, advise colleagues to complete the above tasks themselves. General questions about the PEERS application process and requirements can also be directed to the PEERS team via email at peers@le.ac.uk.

What areas of support might I offer?

While it is ultimately your decision what support you provide your colleagues, the following guidance might help you consider what you probably should do, 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 workshop
- Helping a colleague understand **what the UKPSF means** in relation to their professional practice in Higher Education, focusing particularly on the Descriptor Criteria and the Dimensions of Practice
- Support an applicant in understanding and planning **how to approach the PEERS application** in relation to their personal role and work
- Offering to take part in **peer-to-peer observation** to provide evidence of current 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
- 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**, the UKPSF or the PEERS experiential route and application process - the applicant should access this through 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 who intend to apply for HEA fellowship categories **above those you have achieved** (ie you should not support colleagues applying for Senior Fellow status if you currently have Fellow status).
- **Proof-reading a draft application** or correct or edit the written language within a draft application - the applicant should access alternative support opportunities for help with how to improve written English (such as the [ELTU](#)).

How do I read and review draft applications?

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

You should approach this task in whichever way feels most appropriate to you – 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 – these areas are a good place to start as you read and review the draft. You might find the following resources helpful when reviewing colleagues' applications:

1. The [University Accreditation Panels' Assessment Templates](#) – the forms used by assessment panels to help them make judgements about HEA application submissions
2. The [Frequently Asked Questions list](#) on the PEERS website, which also contains common reasons for referred applications for Associate Fellow and Fellow applications, which include:
 - a. Lack of reflection
 - b. Lack of scholarship
 - c. Lack of discussion of individual practice
3. The checklist for reviewing draft applications ([below](#)).

Suggested checklist for reviewing draft applications:

Questions to consider	What to look for	Suggestions/ideas to improve
<i>Is it a personal account?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Written in the first person ✓ Personal practice and experiences 	→ Read the exemplar applications on PEERS website for style
<i>Is it individual?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Focused on how they teach/support learning ✓ If collaborative activities, emphasise their own role 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Prioritise examples of OWN over collaborative practice → Be clear what their own role was in collaborative practice
<i>Is it reflective?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Going beyond describing practice ✓ Why do they do what they do? ✓ How do they know it is effective? ✓ What worked, what didn't work – why? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Use the 4-point reflective model what-how-why-effectiveness → Deeper consideration of own practice
<i>Is it scholarly?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Show how practice is informed by pedagogic research/theory/concepts/evidence ✓ Justify their practice pedagogically 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Avoid 'supporting' references – only use when specifically referred to → Look for subject-specific pedagogic research → Deeper consideration of rationale for practice
<i>Is it evidence-based?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ How do they evaluate their practice? ✓ What evidence do they call upon? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Get hold of student feedback/evaluations/performance data? → Peer observation outcomes? External examiner comments?
<i>Is it aligned to the UKPSF?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Are all appropriate dimensions covered in sufficient depth? ✓ Use of Dimension 'codes' (A1, K1 etc.) only when being discussed in depth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Use codes sparingly in application – avoid long lists at end of a section (e.g. K1, K2, K3, K4, V1 V3) → Map out where Dimensions are discussed – check for gaps/repetition
<i>Does it meet the category requirements?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Check against appropriate UKPSF Dimensions and Descriptors ✓ Check against PEERS assessment requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Review against UKPSF document and → PEERS handbook/guidance – for specific category
<i>Is it current and sufficient?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Within last 3 years of practice ✓ Any historic practice is connected to current activities ✓ Not too recent to be hard to evaluate impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Consider more recent practice/examples – so long as impact can be evaluated → If discussing historic experience, ensure it is fed into how it influences current activities

How do I support applicants going for the Senior Fellow category?

Remember that if you intend to support a colleague with a Senior Fellowship application you should already have achieved SFHEA status yourself.

As you will know from your own SFHEA application, the Senior Fellow requirements are different to other categories and require some specific consideration and advice. Consider the following when supporting SFHEA applicants and reviewing their draft applications:

- Check that your applicants' 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 they 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. demonstrate 'how' and 'why' they have approached their leadership roles/projects in the way they chose to.
- Examples should be drawn from the **applicant's last 3 (and up to 5) years of practice** – it should be **current**. At the same time, case studies should be able to discuss the impact/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

See below some case studies of staff who have supported others with their HEA fellowship applications. You'll see how others have approached the support they provide and what they have learned from the experience.



[*Maribel Canto-Lopez, University of Leicester*](#)

(see Appendix 1 below for full transcript)



[*Caroline Turnbull, Edinburgh Napier University*](#)

(captions available)



[*Jo Peat, University of Roehampton*](#)

(captions available)

Useful Resources

**All of the following resources can be obtained via the PEERS website
(www.le.ac.uk/peers)**

[PEERS HEA Fellowship Handbooks](#) – the ‘go to’ resource for everything you need to know about applying for HEA fellowship. There is a handbook for each of the fellowship categories (Associate Fellow, Fellow, Senior Fellow)

[Videos on teaching and learning practice](#) – introductions to a range of L&T areas including active learning, assessment and feedback and engaging with educational scholarship. Also includes a video on how to [develop your HEA Fellowship claim](#)

[PEERS Talis Reading List](#) - Including links to online texts related to a range of L&T related articles and resources

[Exemplar HEA applications \(UoL login required\)](#) - There are exemplars for each category of fellowship, drawn from several successful applications. They are a useful way for applicants to see the general style and approach to writing applications.

[Frequently Asked Questions about HEA Fellowships](#) – a useful summary of the common issues and queries that people have when completing their applications. Also includes some of the main reasons why applications are referred rather than passed first time.

[University Accreditation Panels’ Assessment Templates](#) – these are the forms used by the panels who actually assess PEERS HEA fellowship applications. You’ll find them useful to get a sense of what the panels are specifically looking for when judging the quality of applications.

[Guidance for writing HEA fellowship references](#) – useful for yourself if you’re asked to be a reference for colleagues’ fellowship applications, or to pass on to others who may be asked to be referees.

[HEA Guidance – What are the ‘Dimensions’?](#) – a really good extended summary of what each of the ‘Dimensions’ of the UKPSF (the As, Ks and Vs) relate to, with ideas how you might evidence them in your own teaching practice

Appendix 1: Transcript for Maribel Canto-Lopez case study video

Introduction

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 here and I am now a Senior Fellow of the HEA. Having the experience of being an assessor I think I was placed in a good situation to know what was asked for from the HEA. 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 sort of pass and I think also its made, even in some subjects, people more close together too, because when they came to those workshops, they were talking to each other about, you know, the same subject, and some of them realised what maybe other people were doing. So they were helping each other, so I think it created a nice sort of ambience about teaching and now people sometimes come to me with ideas – Maribel what do you think about doing this in teaching. Or like, you know the satisfaction to say, I, now I think we're over the 90% in Law, when we started with quite a low number of people with qualifications. So like having that you know challenge. Many people know me now because of this, like 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 too in teaching, or different ways of teaching. You know, you know what you're colleagues are doing so I think it's quite a good position to be in too.

What types of support do you provide?

I offer different things, because different people, different colleagues are different. So, I do workshops – they work very, very well, and it's also the advantage of having many colleagues together so you don't have to spend that much time. But at the same time, I think we sort of feed from each other in a way, so when I do my workshops we are all sitting in 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 really need in order to write a good application, many people are, bring in ideas that can help other colleagues, or they can actually realise that they were doing something that has actually some pedagogical implications and they didn't know before. So I think it helps a lot. Other people do not like the sort of coming to the workshops and they rather have one to ones, so I have offered that. So over a cappuccino you can fill in the whole application. What I like in the one to ones and on the workshops is make sure that whoever it is has at least a sort of plan, some bullet points so if, you know, if it's for an Associate Fellow where they have like 2 of the areas, or if it's a Fellow where they have the 5 areas, I want them to have some bullet points so you know, they can start filling in the bullet points. 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, you know, my students are very happy with how I teach, I would say, you need to tell me how because I only have your word. So, do you have any feedback from these students, like real feedback? Do you have any numbers of, like 80% like how we teach, or any, you know. Same with when you have been observed by another colleague, so if we have another word like we have other sort of account of how you teach, so we have your students' words, and we have you know 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 like I was saying you know have a look at some pedagogical sort of sources and if they are like more, you know, in your own discipline, they will be like better for you anyway. Evidence, you know, make evidence, put down what students say, what colleagues say, have percentages of how you change, you know, people like it or the marks in that particular thing you teach. Align it with the UK sort of PSF and just make it current. Yes, that's it.