

Senior Fellowship (SFHEA)

Application Guide

This document provides guidance to help you compose your D3 application in the **Senior Fellowship Application Template** prior to online submission via the STAR Framework submission portal at <https://www.imperial.ac.uk/staff/star-framework/submit/>.

The Senior Fellowship Application Template is included in the Senior Fellow Application Pack.

At SFHEA level, you should be able to demonstrate how your comprehensive understanding and effective practice provides a basis from which you lead or influence those who teach and/or support high-quality learning. You must be able to evidence:

- D3.1** a sustained record of leading or influencing the practice of those who teach and/or support high quality learning;
- D3.2** practice that is effective, inclusive and integrates all Dimensions;
- D3.3** practice that extends significantly beyond direct teaching and/or direct support for learning.

The Account of Professional Practice is the heart of your application. It is comprised of three elements: a Reflective Narrative and two Case Studies. You will use each of these elements to explain and demonstrate how you meet the requirements outlined in Descriptor 3 of the PSF. In the Senior Fellowship Application Template there is a dedicated section for each of these elements:

- Section 3 is for your Reflective Narrative;
- Section 4 is for your first Case Study;
- Section 5 is for your second Case Study.

The word limit for the combined case studies and reflective commentary is up to 6000 words (including in-text citations but not including the List of References). You can choose how to spread the balance of the 6,000-word limit across your Reflective Narrative and Case Studies, but we recommend that you should aim to use around 2,000 words in the Reflective Narrative and around 2,000 words in each Case Study.

On the following pages you will find information relating to each section of the Application Template.

1. Personal details

Please enter your name here as you would like it to appear on your Fellowship certificate, as well as your job role, your Department (or Centre, Unit, Institute, etc.), and any teaching qualifications or awards you currently hold, if applicable.

2. Context Statement

Use this section to preface your application with a brief introductory statement (up to 300 words) that includes:

- a concise biography;
- the context in which you currently work;
- the reasons or motivations for your application;
- any other aspect of your context you feel the Reviewers might find relevant or helpful.

The Context Statement is intended to provide the Reviewers with background and context. It is your opportunity to 'set the scene' for the Reviewers but it **does not** form part of your claim and will not be evaluated against the PSF.

3. Reflective Narrative

Your Reflective Narrative will provide an overview of your practice over the last 3 to 5 years using short examples to illustrate the effectiveness of your action. In contrast, the Case Studies provide the opportunity for you to explore and evaluate two examples (one for each case study) in much greater depth.

Senior Fellowship is not role dependent; there are many different contexts in which you might be leading and influencing the practice of others. You may still be engaged with a substantive role in teaching or working directly with students to support learning, but these are **not** examples that you should select to focus on in an application for Senior Fellowship. Expectations for engagement with the PSF Dimensions at Descriptor 3 differ from that expected at Descriptor 2, which is focussed on direct work with learners. Whilst it is important that you address all of the dimensions of the PSF, given the complex and integrative nature of professional practice at this level you should avoid a mechanistic approach to ensuring full coverage. We recognise that there will be considerable variation in applications, reflecting differences in individual's experience, their job roles and institutional contexts. The quality of your reflection is far more important than quantity.

There are different ways in which you might choose to structure and write your Reflective Narrative. As stated above, we recommend that you use around 2,000 words in total (of the 6,000-word limit) for this part of your claim and you will need to decide how best to use this allocation. One possible way (but there are others) is to identify 'themes' from your practice – perhaps issues that are important to you and which you are working to promote, or 'domains' in which you coordinate or influence others in their teaching practice. These themes could then be presented with sub-headings, creating a structure for you to organise and present your examples of your effective practice.

To illustrate this further, some themes that might possibly emerge could be ones such as those below, but remember these are purely indicative suggestions:

- leading and influencing learning, teaching and assessment practice
- managing change
- collaborating with colleagues external to the College
- mentoring (formal or informal)
- integrating technology-enhanced learning into effective practice
- shaping inclusive practice; and many other possible themes.

If you take this thematic approach, your 'themes' will be unique to your context and the nature of your practice; they must emerge from your own personal examples of practice. You may prefer to use a different approach to structure your Reflective Narrative to suit your own writing style, context, etc. But if you do take this thematic approach, you might choose 3 or 4 different themes and use each theme as a subheading. Under each subheading use succinct examples that together identify the effectiveness of your actions on the others' practices and high-quality learning as you worked with, and through, your peers.

In order to ensure that your reflective commentary is sufficiently reflective and evaluative use these questions to guide you in writing about the specific examples from your practice:

What did you do?

A concise description of the engagement, emphasising your specific role or contribution.

How did you do it?

An explanation of approach/methodology you employed.

Why did you do it that way?

The evidence-base, scholarly influences or rationale for the choices you made (a good opportunity for integrating your engagement with relevant Core Knowledge and Professional Values).

What difference did it make?

What impact did your actions have (e.g. on colleagues, systems and processes, policies, departmental (or institutional) culture and values? How do you know you had this influence – what was the evidence for it?

4 & 5. Case Studies

The first stage in deciding the focus of each of your Case Studies is to choose the most appropriate two examples of your work (one for each case study) that provide you with the best opportunity to fully explore and evaluate your influence on the practices of others and on high quality learning as a result. Case studies are commonly complex in their different elements and take place over a period of time.

We recommend that you choose two Case Studies that address two different aspects of your practice as this will give you opportunity to most effectively build evidence towards the three Descriptor criteria statement and to incorporate different PSF Dimensions (i.e. avoid choosing case studies which both focus on programme design, or mentoring, or teaching or assessment approaches, etc.). You should focus on appropriate examples of your recent practice, **typically from the last 3-5 years**. If you need to refer back to practice from more than 5 years ago, or examples that occurred at another institution, you need to ensure that you focus on how they now influence your current practice at Imperial.

As with your Reflective Narrative, throughout your Case Studies you should continue to reflect on your practice rather than just describe the action you took – indeed, given the more in-depth nature of the case Studies, the explanation of your approach, rationale and reflection on outcomes may need to be more detailed. Some key aspects for you to consider as you write are outlined below:

- Use a title for the Case Study that reflects the Senior Fellow focus on leading/ influencing others
- Provide a context for the case study so the reader understands what the issue was that required action
- Explain your aim/ goal – what you were seeking to achieve and why
- Discuss what you did and why you did it that way (include evidence base)
- Outline the timescale and who you worked with (and why these people)
- Explain what approach(es) you took, include any problems/ challenges you experienced and how you managed them
- Discuss the outcome – what happened?
- Explain the impact(s). What was achieved? How do you know that what you did was effective?
- Identify what you would do differently next time/ how you have adapted your approach in subsequent work.

Remember that the two Case Studies make up the majority of your claim if you follow the recommendation to use around 2,000 words on each Case Study. Keep in mind throughout that for Senior Fellowship (D3) you need to show a 'sustained record' of leading or influencing (D3.1). You will also need to show that your practice is effective, inclusive and integrates all Dimensions (D3.2). For D3.3 your evidence will need to show that your practice extends **significantly beyond** direct teaching and/or direct support for learning – you are more likely to be influencing learners *indirectly* through your **influence on colleagues** in their teaching and/or support of learning.

For more guidance about how to write about selected examples from your practice, you may refer to the **STAR Framework Participants Handbook** and the **Advance HE Senior Fellowship (D3) Guide to the PSF 2023 Dimensions** (both documents are included in the Application Pack). For specific guidance as you develop your application, you can book a STAR Individual Support Session via the STAR Framework website at <https://www.imperial.ac.uk/staff/star-framework/workshops/>.

To help organise your thoughts, you might find it helpful to use the table on the following page to map examples of your practice against Descriptor 3. The majority of your examples should focus on practice that extends significantly beyond direct teaching and/or direct support for learning, including ways in which you influence the teaching practice of colleagues. (You do not need to submit the table with your application).

Mapping aspects of your practice to the Dimensions at D3

Demonstrating Engagement with the PSF Examples from your Practice		PSF Dimensions		
		A 1-5	K 1-5	V 1-5
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				

6. List of References

Section 6 of the Application Template provides a dedicated space for you to list any references you cited in your narrative. Integrating some discussion of relevant literature or other published resources in your Account of Professional Practice can be an effective way to demonstrate the sources of your knowledge base and influences, or the scholarship that underpins and guides your practice. Please use in-text citations in the main body of your narrative, and ensure you include all cited sources in your List of References in Section 6, following Harvard referencing style.

7. Supporting Statements

Your application for Senior Fellowship must be endorsed by two Supporting Statements from referees. The Supporting Statements endorse your claim and are used by the reviewers to confirm that your application presents a fair and accurate reflection of your higher education practice.

Your referees should work, or have recently worked, closely with you and have first-hand knowledge of your practice so that they are in a position to comment on and endorse your application. Please note that Supporting Statements should reflect a professional relationship (i.e. not be from a family member or based on a personal friendship). Referees need to have current or recent experience of working in higher education and to be familiar with the PSF 2023 (for example, as a holder of one of the four categories of Fellowship, **although this is not essential**). We recognise that these are different kinds of references from those normally required for promotion or job appointment, as we are looking for evidence of commitment to and effectiveness of teaching and/or supporting learning rather than general academic achievement. The Supporting Statements should refer primarily to your experience and achievements in teaching and/or supporting learning and should refer to your research record only if this directly informs your teaching.

It is important that you read the Supporting Statements your referees provide, as they may refer to aspects of your practice that could strengthen your application; if this is the case then you could revise parts of your application and ask your referees to check that they are happy to endorse the changes you have made before you submit. When you have received your Supporting Statements, save them in PDF format before uploading to the STAR Framework submission portal with your application (so you will submit three PDF files in total).

The Fellow Application Pack includes the **FHEA Supporting Statement Template** that you can share with your referees. The Template includes guidance and structure for writing a Supporting Statement that your referees may find helpful.

The Supporting Statements are not used by reviewers to fill any gaps in the evidence you provide towards the Descriptor. The reviewers will need to see sufficient evidence of effective practice in your Reflective Narrative to meet Descriptor 2 for them to award Fellowship. Please bear in mind that you may be asked to provide an alternative Supporting Statement or two new Supporting Statements for a variety of reasons when reviewers of your application judge that one or both of these statements do not fully verify and endorse the evidence in your application.

If you require any further information regarding the referee process, or the accreditation of teaching at Imperial, please contact:

staradmin@imperial.ac.uk