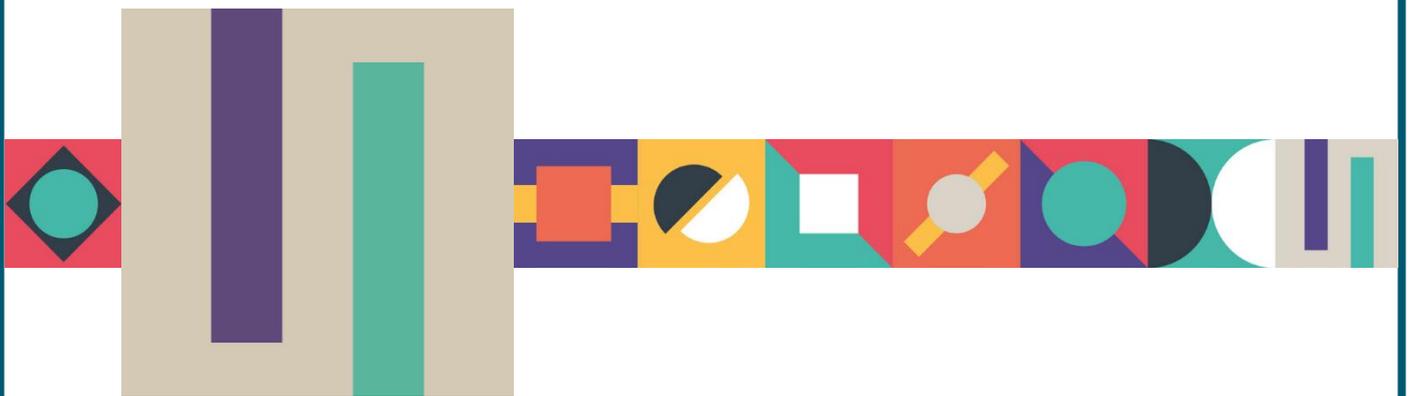


Accreditation Policy 2020-21



Advance HE Accreditation Policy 2020-21

1. Policy statement

Advance HE was formed in March 2018, following the merger of the Equality Challenge Unit, the Higher Education Academy and the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education. Advance HE continues the work of the former Higher Education Academy (HEA) in accrediting programmes for the initial and continuing professional development (CPD) of staff that teach and support learning working in higher education providers globally. Accreditation provides external and independent confirmation that professional development is aligned with the UK Professional Standards Framework for Teaching and Supporting Learning in Higher Education ([UKPSF, 2011](#)) and provides participants with the opportunity to be professionally recognised for their higher education practice through the HEA Fellowship scheme.

The aim of this policy is to provide a clear position relating to the requirements of Advance HE accreditation. The [Guide to addressing the criteria for accreditation 2020-21](#) document (available on the accreditation area of the [website](#)) draws on this policy and sets out the information required to address the accreditation criteria within an institutional submission. Institutions must use this policy in conjunction with the guidance. The [Advance HE accreditation submission template 2020-21](#) must be used when applying for accreditation.

2. Terms of accreditation

Accreditation is only available to Advance HE Full Member institutions paying for accreditation services as part of their institutional membership; either through choice of accreditation as the core member peer-review service or through additional payment for the accreditation service. Affiliate/International Affiliate membership does not include accreditation services. Institutions should contact the accreditation team (accreditation@advance-he.ac.uk) if they wish to check whether their Advance HE membership includes accreditation.

Advance HE membership entitles institutions to make one accreditation submission consisting of up to five programmes in every four-year cycle. Further submissions incur a fee. Please refer to Appendix 1 for the full Terms and Conditions related to Advance HE accreditation.

Accreditation is only valid while the institution continues to be an Advance HE Full Member with accreditation services (please refer to Appendix 1i).

2.1 Accreditation start and end dates

Accreditation can commence on 1 September, 1 January, 1 February or 1 May and runs for a period of four years. The following submission deadlines and associated start dates apply:

Accreditation submission deadline	Earliest programme start date
30 September 2020	1 January 2021
31 October 2020	1 February 2021
31 January 2021	1 May 2021
31 March 2021	1 September 2021
30 September 2021	1 January 2022
31 October 2021	1 February 2022

Accreditation must be confirmed prior to the programme start date. Backdating of the accreditation start date is not permissible.

Institutions new to accreditation will be initially accredited for a 12 month period, during which time Advance HE will monitor and review the quality of the provision. At the end of this period, Advance HE will require the institution to complete an initial report template, submit a report from the External Reviewer/Examiner and provide identified samples of participant/reviewer documentation. After successful completion of this initial report, accreditation will be extended for a further three years. Institutions new to accreditation must successfully complete the initial reporting period before any further submission (which would incur an additional fee if made within the four year period) can be considered.

2.2 Remit of accredited status

Advance HE accreditation is available for programmes that develop and/or professionally recognise the teaching and learning practices of staff supporting Higher Education (HE) learning. Advance HE accredits a variety of programmes relevant to teaching and learning practices, such as postgraduate certificates, continuing professional development (CPD) programmes and stand-alone modules, but other institution-led programmes may be eligible.

The terms and conditions of accreditation enable institutions to offer their accredited programmes to staff employed across any of their sites. Full details must be included within the institutional submission (please refer to the [Guide to addressing the criteria for accreditation 2020-21](#)).

If an accredited institution validates HE programmes at a partner institution (deemed a 'collaborative partnership'), the institutional submission may include delivery of accredited programmes to staff at the collaborative partner institution. If the collaborative partner is an Advance HE member institution, including Affiliate/International Affiliate membership, successful participants will be awarded HEA Fellowship without an additional fee being due. If the collaborative partner institution is not an Advance HE member institution, successful participants are charged an additional fee for HEA Fellowship (please refer to Appendix 1).

Full details about use of accredited programmes for staff at collaborative partner institutions must be included within the institutional submission to enable the panel to review the arrangements and resourcing in place (please refer to the [Guide to addressing the criteria for accreditation 2020-21](#) for the level of information required). Where institutions would like to add a new collaborative partner institution during the accreditation cycle, Advance HE's [Major/Minor Change Process](#) provides opportunity to extend accreditation to this arrangement.

Accreditation does not cover programmes or resources that are developed for commercial sale by the member institution. Advance HE offers a separate [Approvals service](#) for programmes of this nature.

Appendix 1 of this policy sets out the full terms and conditions applying to Advance HE accreditation.

3. Accreditation criteria

Accreditation submissions are reviewed against the four accreditation criteria set out below. Key requirements in relation to these criteria are set out in Section 4 of this policy and the [Guide to addressing the criteria for accreditation 2020-21](#) provides full explanation about the information required within the institutional submission. The UKPSF Descriptors are found on pages 4-7 of the [UKPSF](#) (2011) and are the basis for the award of HEA Fellowship.

3.1 Criterion 1 – institutional commitment

The institution can evidence a commitment to the continuous professional development of staff that teach and support learning:

- a. institutional strategies and approaches to the development of staff that teach and support learning align with the UKPSF;
- b. there is clear rationale for the proposed accredited programme(s) consistent with the institution's approach to learning and teaching;
- c. quality assurance and enhancement of accredited programmes are monitored and managed at an institutional level;
- d. there are sufficient resources in place for each site of delivery to ensure effective and sustainable operation of the programmes appropriate to institutional strategy.

3.2 Criterion 2 – programme design

The programme is designed to ensure participants utilise the UKPSF to both develop their practice and evidence their success:

- a. the design of the programme provides explicit opportunities for participants to make clear associations between the programme, their practice and the relevant UKPSF Descriptor;
- b. the programme accurately reflects the relevant category of HEA Fellowship;
- c. the design of assessment ensures that participants will explicitly evidence effective practice to meet the criteria of the relevant UKPSF Descriptor;
- d. assessment includes a mechanism to authenticate practice.

3.3 Criterion 3 – support and guidance

The support and guidance provided will enable participants to utilise the UKPSF to develop and evidence their practice:

- a. participants are supported to make clear associations between their professional development opportunities, their practice and the appropriate category of HEA Fellowship;
- b. guidance relating to assessment supports participants to evidence their professional HE practice in line with the requirements of the relevant UKPSF Descriptor;

- c. those with responsibility for the management and operation of the programme hold an appropriate category of HEA Fellowship and can demonstrate continuing development in relation to HEA Fellowship;
- d. those with responsibility for supporting participants can demonstrate current knowledge and understanding of the requirements for the relevant category of HEA Fellowship.

3.4 Criterion 4 – Fellowship judgements

The processes through which Fellowship judgements are made are reliable, valid and robust and embed the criteria of the relevant UKPSF Descriptor(s):

- a. judgements are made against the relevant UKPSF Descriptor criteria;
- b. all individuals involved in the Fellowship judgement process:
 - hold an appropriate category of HEA Fellowship;
 - are suitably trained to make fellowship judgements for the relevant category of HEA Fellowship;
 - can demonstrate current knowledge and understanding of the requirements for the relevant category of HEA Fellowship.
- c. all stages in the judgement process are clearly defined and supported by clear and transparent documentation;
- d. Fellowship judgements are appropriately quality assured.

4 Key requirements

While recognising the variety of institutions and the range of programmes for which Advance HE accreditation may be sought, Advance HE has a responsibility to ensure the consistency and comparability of the fellowship judgements being made. To ensure this the following key requirements must be evidenced within all accredited programmes.

4.1 Institutional commitment to CPD

4.1.1 *Provision of CPD for staff beyond the award of Fellowship*

As each category of Fellowship requires a commitment to continuing professional development, beyond the point of professional recognition ([Advance HE Fellowship Code of Practice for HEA Fellows](#)), the institution must provide ongoing developmental opportunities for all staff that teach and/or support learning. This institutional commitment is expected to be extended to collaborative partner institutions where opportunity to participate on accredited programmes is offered (please refer to Appendix 1).

4.1.2 *Expectation for staff supporting accredited provision to undertake regular development*

To ensure that programme teams, mentors and internal reviewers/assessors remain current in their knowledge and understanding of the requirements of the UKPSF and HEA Fellowship, the institution must demonstrate how engagement in initial training and CPD relevant to these requirements is monitored and managed at an institutional level.

4.2 Authentication of practice

To meet the requirements for HEA Fellowship, the professional practice of participants must be authenticated. Therefore, all accredited programmes must be designed to include a means to authenticate practice.

'Formal' observation of a participant's professional practice may provide authentication. Formal observation involves a member of the programme team or mentor/expert peer who has current knowledge and understanding of the requirements of the relevant category of HEA Fellowship. Formal observation of participants' direct teaching is not appropriate to provide authentication of the nature of practice expected at Descriptors 3 and 4.

Where a formal observation of practice is not part of the programme/scheme, supporting statements from referees/advocates* are required to authenticate practice as set out in the table below:

Category of HEA Fellowship	Requirement to authenticate practice
Associate Fellow	A minimum of one supporting statement verifying that the application presents a fair and honest reflection of the participant's practice in line with the requirements of Associate Fellowship (Descriptor 1).
Fellow Senior Fellow	Two supporting statements verifying that the application presents a fair and honest reflection of the participant's practice in line with the category of HEA Fellowship (Fellow or Senior Fellow) applied for.
Principal Fellow	Three supporting statements recommending the applicant for Principal Fellowship. One supporting statement must comment on how the applicant has influenced the advocate's practice and one statement must be from an advocate external to the applicant's institution. At least one advocate must hold a category of HEA Fellowship.

*Supporting statements must be unique to the applicant

As accreditation confers the responsibility to award HEA Fellowships on behalf of Advance HE, institutions must require individuals applying for HEA Fellowship to confirm that the application/assessment they are submitting is their own work. In addition, institutions should have defined policies and processes to protect academic integrity and to prevent unethical behaviour. HEA Fellows must agree to abide by the [Advance HE Code of Practice for HEA Fellows](#) and Advance HE reserves the right to remove HEA Fellowship from an individual who fails to uphold the Code of Practice.

4.3 Support and guidance

4.3.1 Submission of participant-facing guidance

As the accreditation panel process takes a **participant-facing viewpoint**, it is a requirement that full participant facing guidance is submitted for each programme. In addition, an accompanying institutional commentary is required within the accreditation submission template provided. The [Guide to addressing the criteria for accreditation 2020-21](#) document sets out the information required.

4.3.2 *Ensuring participants undertake an appropriate route to HEA Fellowship*

Institutions must ensure that participants are supported to identify the appropriate category of HEA Fellowship to suit their practice and experience. As Fellowships are awarded on the basis of personal practice, when enrolling participants onto programmes institutions must ensure that these individuals will be able to provide sufficient evidence of teaching and/or supporting learning higher education practice to meet the requirements of the relevant UKPSF Descriptor.

4.3.3 *Appeals and complaints*

Higher education providers have procedures for handling academic appeals and complaints relevant to the quality of learning opportunities; guidance for participants undertaking accredited programmes should reference these procedures. Institutions should ensure that procedures relating to an appeal/complaint are conducted in a timely and fair manner; any action resulting should progress through appropriate institutional procedures and feed into enhancement processes.

If an individual makes a complaint to Advance HE regarding their experience on an accredited programme, Advance HE will point the complainant to the appeals and/or complaints procedure at the accredited institution wherever an issue raised relates to institutional policy/procedure or support provided. Advance HE will not intervene in matters between an institution and participant relating to institutional policy or procedure, but reserves the right to intervene in instances where a complaint/appeal might relate to Advance HE standards or policy requirements or deviation from an accredited process.

Should a complaint relate to a potential compromise of Advance HE accredited process, policy requirements or standards, Advance HE will investigate in line with the Advance HE Complaints Policy and reserves the right to apply appropriate sanctions, up to and including suspension of a programme's accreditation.

The [Advance HE Code of Practice for HEA Fellows](#) sets out principles and expectations for HEA Fellows and Advance HE reserves the right to remove an individual's HEA Fellowship on the grounds of academic or professional misconduct following formal investigation by Advance HE and associated Advance HE disciplinary procedures. Where an individual is investigated for professional misconduct relating to the award of Fellowship within an institution (for example, identification of plagiarism in an application for Fellowship), Advance HE reserves the right to suspend the individual's Fellowship pending the outcome of the internal investigation and subsequent formal report of the outcome by the institutional contact.

4.3.4 *Matters of concern*

Institutions must provide an appropriate mechanism for an individual to raise a matter of concern relating to an accredited programme in a confidential manner, and for this concern to be investigated without disadvantage. The mechanism for raising a matter of concern should articulate with institutional policies designed to protect the well-being of staff and students. Institutions should ensure that where a matter of concern is raised, it is investigated in a timely and fair manner and in line with relevant institutional policies (e.g. HR policy and procedure). Any action resulting should progress through appropriate institutional procedures and feed into enhancement processes.

4.4 HEA Fellowship judgements

4.4.1 Format of the assessment

Institutions may design the format of the assessment through which fellowship judgements are made but must demonstrate **equivalence** to the requirements of the **Reflective Account of Practice** in a written direct application to Advance HE for each category of HEA Fellowship as listed below:

Category	Requirements for Advance HE direct application
Associate Fellowship	1400 word limit for Reflective Account of Practice plus Context Statement (up to 300 words) and citations (up to 200 words)
Fellowship	3000 word limit for Reflective Account of Practice plus Context Statement (up to 300 words) and citations (up to 500 words)
Senior Fellowship	6000 word limit for Reflective Account of Practice including Case Studies plus Context Statement (up to 300 words) and citations (up to 500 words)
Principal Fellowship	Record of Educational Impact and 7000 word limit for Reflective Account of Practice plus citations (up to 500 words)

The [Guide to addressing the criteria for accreditation 2020-21](#) illustrates how other formats of assessment might reflect equivalence to the written direct application for each category of Fellowship.

4.4.2 Fellowship judgement process

Institutional processes must result in reliable and robust fellowship judgements being made by reviewers holding appropriate HEA Fellowship status and demonstrating current knowledge and understanding of the requirements of the relevant Descriptor.

Advance HE defines the role of a 'moderator' (Descriptors 1-3) to be one of ensuring consistency and appropriateness across all fellowship judgements through sampling. Samples for moderation should be selected to reflect an appropriate range of applications/assessed work across the different fellowship categories and different reviewers/assessors to ensure the consistency and appropriateness of fellowship judgements.

The minimum requirements for the number of reviewers/assessors and their HEA Fellowship status are set out in the table below:

Academic credit-bearing programmes	
HEA Fellowship judgement	Reviewer/assessor requirements
Associate Fellow Fellow	<p>If the quality assurance processes of an academic credit-bearing programme explicitly consider HEA Fellowship judgements, one suitably trained and experienced assessor holding FHEA, SFHEA or PFHEA is required plus internal moderation through sampling in line with institutional policy carried out by a second internal assessor who holds FHEA, SFHEA or PFHEA.</p> <p>Where academic credit-bearing programmes do not have formal institutional quality assurance processes to explicitly consider HEA Fellowship judgements, two suitably trained and experienced assessors, each holding FHEA, SFHEA or PFHEA, are required.</p>
All other accredited programmes/schemes	
HEA Fellowship judgement	Reviewer requirements
Associate Fellow Fellow	Two suitably trained and experienced reviewers independently review applications and reach a consensus judgement; each reviewer must hold FHEA, SFHEA or PFHEA.
Senior Fellow	<p>Where an institution is experienced in the award of SFHEA, two suitably trained and experienced reviewers independently review applications and reach a consensus decision; all reviewers must hold SFHEA or PFHEA.</p> <p>Where the award of SFHEA is new to the institution, it is a requirement that three reviewers independently review applications and reach a majority decision with one of the three reviewers being a suitably experienced External (see Section 4.6.2).</p>
Principal Fellow	Three suitably trained and experienced reviewers (two internal and one external); all must hold PFHEA.

4.4.3 Conflict of interest

The fellowship judgement process must be free of any conflict of interest. For example, mentors/coaches must not be involved in the final fellowship judgement for individuals they have supported.

4.5 Accredited prior learning

Where accredited prior learning (e.g. APL/APEL/APCL/RPL, etc.) is accepted as partial exemption for academic credit on an academic credit-bearing programme (e.g. postgraduate certificate), institutional mechanisms must ensure that sufficient evidence of effective practice is presented to fully meet the requirements of the relevant category of HEA Fellowship by the end of the programme. Evidence presented for the fellowship judgement must include authentication of practice.

Accredited prior learning is not accepted within experiential routes to HEA Fellowship; i.e. a full claim for each distinctive category of HEA Fellowship is required.

4.6 Role of the External

To ensure reliable HEA Fellowship judgements are made and to support the continuing development of programmes, Advance HE requires that appropriate externality is embedded within all accredited provision. Institutions must appoint an appropriate External examiner/reviewer (one or more individuals) to fulfil the following functions as identified in Sections 4.6.1-4.6.4 below:

4.6.1 *External as one of three independent reviewers at Descriptor 4*

An **External (PFHEA)** is one of the three independent assessors/reviewers required to make fellowship judgements on applications for Principal Fellowship.

4.6.2 *External as one of three independent reviewers at Descriptor 3*

Where accreditation at **Descriptor 3 is new to an institution**, it is a requirement that an **External is one of the three independent assessors/reviewers** required to make fellowship judgements on applications for Senior Fellowship.

Once the institution becomes experienced at making Senior Fellowship judgements and Advance HE has confidence that judgements made are reliable, valid and robust, the institution may apply through the Minor Changes Process to revise the External role to become one of external moderation through sampling of Senior Fellowship judgements made by two independent internal reviewers (as in Section 4.6.3 below).

4.6.3 *External moderation of fellowship judgements for all programmes at Descriptors 1-3:*

Applications for HEA Fellowship/programme assessment leading to the award of HEA Fellowship (Descriptors 1-3) should be **moderated by the External** through appropriate sampling prior to the final fellowship judgement being made (i.e. **during the active decision making process**). The sample will be selected to reflect an appropriate range of applications/assessed work across the different fellowship categories and different assessors to ensure the consistency and appropriateness of fellowship judgements. The External moderator will focus on the appropriateness and consistency of internal decision-making to ensure that the criteria of the relevant descriptor are reliably met before Fellowship is awarded (please refer to the [Guide for addressing the criteria for accreditation 2020-21](#) for further guidance).

4.6.4 Mechanism for formal reporting on the quality of accredited programmes by the External
Appropriate institutional quality mechanisms must embed formal reporting by the External on the quality of accredited programmes; for example, the External may attend an appropriate internal panel/board/committee or provide a formal written report to such a meeting. **The External will formally report on the quality assurance and quality enhancement processes** relating to the participant experience and appropriateness of fellowship judgements (Descriptors 1-4), in line with Advance HE requirements, for each accredited programme/scheme. External reports should be formally considered through the accredited institution-level QA governance system. Institutions must formally respond to the External about resulting actions taken relating to quality assurance and/or enhancement.

4.6.5 Advance HE requirements for External appointments

An External expert provides a level of independence that is important in decision-making and ensuring that quality and standards are met ([QAA, 2018](#)). Advance HE requires that all External appointees are:

- + HEA Senior or Principal Fellows;
- + suitably experienced in making HEA Fellowship judgements and current in their knowledge and understanding of the requirements of the relevant category(s) of Fellowship;
- + impartial in judgement and wholly independent of the provider and its staff. Appointments must be free from reciprocal external relationships and any actual or perceived conflict of interest; this precludes recent employees/ governors/ students (within last 5 years), a near relative or partner, a member of staff of any of the institution's collaborative partners and individuals involved in a close professional collaboration with staff delivering/ managing the provision.

The External appointment should be governed by a Terms of Reference, including a maximum term in post. The External responsible for formal reporting on the quality of accredited programmes (Section 4.6.4) should not normally hold a similar post concurrently at more than three Advance HE accredited institutions.

4.6.6 Data Protection Act (DPA) and the External

The introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2019 means that any External acting on behalf of an institution will act as a 'Data Processor' for the institution's data; i.e. the institution will provide the External with data. The institution will need to ensure that Externals work in line with the requirements of the DPA and maintain confidentiality and security of the data at all times.

5. Advance HE accreditation application procedure

Application for Advance HE accreditation is made via a documentary submission. The submission must be emailed to accreditation@advance-he.ac.uk

A complete submission must include:

- + a fully completed accreditation submission template endorsed by the institutional signatory;
- + participant-facing guidance for each programme.

Incomplete submissions will be returned to the institution, which may result in a postponed start date, as the submission will be then be allocated to a later accreditation panel.

6. Advance HE accreditation panel review process

Advance HE accreditation panels review application submissions against the accreditation criteria. Accreditation decisions are made by a panel of independent accreditors chaired by a member of Advance HE staff. Accreditors are Senior or Principal Fellows who undertake initial training with Advance HE and are required to participate in the Advance HE annual cycle of continuing professional development activities.

The panel process will lead to one of three accreditation decisions being made for each programme presented as set out below.

6.1 Accredited

Accreditation can be awarded with no further action required. Feedback will include identification of good practice and may include recommendations for future development.

6.2 Accredited subject to conditions

The programme can be accredited subject to conditions set by the accreditation panel being met. Within the feedback, areas of good practice will be identified and an accreditation action plan will be provided.

The institution will need to provide further information/revised information to address the conditions within the action plan. The deadline for the submission of this additional/revised information will normally be one month, at which point the revised submission will be considered by the original panel.

Should the revised submission not fully address the actions set, there will be one final opportunity for additional evidence to be considered. Again, the deadline set for providing additional information will usually be one month.

If the second revised submission does not fully address the actions, a full new submission will need to be made, for which there will be an additional charge.

6.3 Returned for further development

Where the accreditation panel judgement is that major development is required to meet the accreditation criteria, the programme documentation is returned to the institution with explanatory guidance. The new submission will undergo a full review process without a fee, however, if the panel outcome is 'Returned for further development' on this occasion, any further submission will be charged at the full additional submission rate.

6.4 Communication of the Panel outcome

A letter feeding back on the panel outcome will be sent electronically to the institutional contact and named programme managers, normally within fifteen working days of the accreditation panel meeting. If the outcome is to 'accredit subject to conditions', an accreditation action plan will accompany the feedback letter.

6.5 Award of Advance HE accreditation

Once the accreditation panel considers that the accreditation criteria are fully met (i.e. any conditions set have been successfully addressed), Advance HE will confirm that accreditation is awarded. A certificate and official letter will be issued to the institutional contact. The start and end date of accreditation and the titles of all provision accredited will be detailed on the certificate. Advance HE portal access to enter completers will be provided for the programme leaders and administrators listed in Part B of the accreditation submission template.

7. Advance HE review of accredited programmes

7.1 Annual review of accredited CPD schemes

Advance HE requires institutions to complete an annual review of all accredited CPD schemes. At present Advance HE does not require an annual review for accredited taught programmes.

A template for the annual CPD review will be sent to institutions each year. The completed template must be emailed to Advance HE by the deadline set via the CPD Review mailbox (cpdreview@advance-HE.ac.uk). Please note that the External's report will be required as part of the Annual CPD Review from the 2019-20 annual review onwards.

Failure to return a fully completed annual review may result in accreditation being suspended.

7.2 Annual institutional visits

Annually Advance HE will visit a number of institutions to review their fellowship judgement processes. These institutions will be contacted in advance to arrange a visit, although Advance HE reserves the right to request access to the operation of any accredited programmes.

7.3 Sampling of internal applications for quality assurance purposes

For quality assurance purposes, Advance HE can request all documentation relating to an award of HEA Fellowship made through an accredited programme (e.g. full application, completed review proformas, committee minutes, etc.). Institutions are required to maintain an archive of written applications, outcomes and feedback to applicants for a period of three years. All documentation should be stored in unalterable format that indicates the time and date of archive. Similarly, where oral forms of assessment are used, an oral or video recording must be available to Advance HE for the same period. Participants must be informed about these requirements and upon request to be provided with access to their own personal data in accordance with prevailing data protection legislation. Advance HE notes that internal reviewers carry out their role on a confidential basis and, save where required by law or where they provide consent, reviewers' personal data should not be released to others. The institution is responsible for ensuring ethical storage of the data during the archive period and for disposal of data in line with the institution's data storage policy after the three-year archive period.

8. Making minor and/or major changes to accredited programmes

Institutions are responsible for ensuring that their programmes operate as explicitly accredited, however, to enable institutions to make a change to accredited programmes, Advance HE offers a Major/Minor Change Process. Guidance about this process is available on the [website](#). A fee of £3,000 is charged for review of a Major Change.

Changes proposed by an institution must be considered and approved by Advance HE in advance of the change being implemented. If approved, the 'change' can be implemented for the remainder of the current accreditation cycle.

8.1 COVID-19 related changes to provision 1 August 2020 - 31 July 2021

Advance HE understands the many challenges that institutions are facing related to COVID-19 and wishes to support our member institutions to successfully operate their accredited provision; some temporary adjustments may be necessary to enable this. Required changes will vary depending on the context of the institution. For example, accredited institutions may need to find an appropriate alternative method to authenticate practice which could involve observation of online teaching, observation of recorded practice (e.g. previous lecture capture, etc.), switching to a requirement for supporting statements instead of observation, etc. There may also be a need to adapt summative assessment tasks; for example, action research projects may be disrupted.

Any temporary changes introduced for the period 1 August 2020 – 31 July 2021 should be clearly articulated in guidance for participants/ observers/ mentors/ assessors in order to support them to appropriately work to the requirements of the relevant Descriptor, ensuring that quality and standards are maintained.

In these exceptional circumstances Advance HE does not require institutions to apply for an approved temporary change to accredited provision. Please contact us at accreditation@advance-he.ac.uk for further guidance if required.

8.2 Academic Professional Apprenticeship (England only) changes to provision 1 August 2020 - 31 July 2021

In 2020, Advance HE worked with the Trailblazers and Vitae to gain agreement from the Institute for Apprentices and the funding body (ESFA) that the Academic Professional Apprenticeship (APA) training can be fully online; the online learning cannot be entirely self-directed and must include interactive learning and synchronous activities. This is not a temporary response to COVID-19 and wholly online training is permanently approved to draw down the same levy funding as a blended offer.

8.2.1 Major Changes to accredited Academic Professional Apprenticeship programmes

In the academic year 2020-21, any [Major Change](#) to Postgraduate Certificate programmes, or modules within these, designed to meet the requirements of the Academic Role Apprenticeship (Level 7) in England will not incur a charge; however, a fee of £6,000 applies should a new programme be submitted for accreditation outside the institution's four-year accreditation/reaccreditation cycle (please refer to Appendix 1).

8.2.2 Commercial offer of online accredited Academic Professional Apprenticeship programmes in response to COVID-19

As Advance HE accreditation is a key full member institution benefit, accreditation is awarded for use of programmes with employees, staff at named collaborative partner institutions, and clinical educators (please refer to Appendix 1i). However, in recognition of the challenges presented by the COVID-19 crisis, for a limited period Advance HE members are able to offer an accredited online Academic Role Apprenticeship (APA) programme to individuals from other institutions, with the ability to confer Fellowship as an outcome. This sits outside the standard Terms and Conditions of accreditation and is in place for enrolments between 1 August 2020 and 1 February 2022 in order to support institutions in England without an online APA programme to utilise levy funding for the professional development of their staff. Institutions wishing to offer their accredited APA programme in this manner will be charged a fee of £400 for any enrollee falling outside of those eligible as outlined above. Institutions wishing to take advantage of this opportunity should contact the accreditation team (accreditation@advance-he.ac.uk) for further details.

9. Data protection

To support the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018, institutions should follow the obligations set out in the Advance HE: Membership Packages terms and conditions (worldwide) 2020/21; available at <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/membership/1920-terms-and-conditions>. These terms and conditions reflect the Data Controller to Data Controller relationship with Advance HE to protect the personal data of participants undertaking accredited programmes and the members of institutional staff that support schemes.

Please contact the Accreditation team on accreditation@advance-he.ac.uk or the Advance HE Data Protection Officer on data.protection@advance-he.ac.uk for any concerns surrounding data protection.

Appendix 1 - Accreditation and professional recognition Terms and Conditions

(i) Accreditation of programmes and professional recognition schemes

Accreditation is only available to Advance HE Full Member institutions paying for accreditation services as part of their institutional membership to the Advance HE; Affiliate/International Affiliate membership does not include accreditation services. Accreditation is only valid while the institution continues their institutional membership, including accreditation services. If an institution terminates its Advance HE membership or chooses not to include the accreditation service as part of this membership, only participants who have already successfully completed programmes during the period of membership that included accreditation services are eligible to be awarded HEA Fellowship. The institution is responsible for communicating the change to any participants who are part way through a programme.

As part of their Advance HE Full membership including accreditation services entitlement, institutions can make one free accreditation submission consisting of up to five programmes in every four-year cycle. Institutions wishing to present additional programmes for accreditation within this period will be liable for a fee per submission of up to five programmes. In 2020-21, the fee is £6,000. Please ask the Advance HE accreditation team for further information (accreditation@advance-he.ac.uk).

Once awarded, accreditation will be in place for a four-year period, after which a new submission for accreditation will be required.

Institutions new to accreditation will be initially accredited for a 12-month period, during which time Advance HE will monitor and review the quality of the provision. At the end of this period, Advance HE will require the institution to complete an initial report template, submit a report from the External Reviewer/Examiner and provide identified samples of participant/reviewer documentation. After successful completion of this initial report, accreditation will be extended for a further three years. Institutions new to accreditation must successfully complete the initial reporting period before any further submission (which would incur an additional fee if made within the four-year period) can be considered.

The terms and conditions of accreditation enable institutions to offer their accredited programmes to staff employed across any of their sites. Full details must be included within the institutional submission (please refer to the [Guide to addressing the criteria for accreditation 2020-21](#)). Advance HE Full membership includes fee-free recognition for all staff directly employed by the member institution; this includes staff at overseas campuses where the member institution employs these individuals directly (i.e. not through a third party arrangement). In this instance, the member institution must discuss the employment status of staff at overseas campuses with the Advance HE accreditation team and provide Advance HE with a list of successful participants to ensure that individuals directly employed by the member institution but based in a different country are not charged the additional fee.

If an accredited institution validates HE programmes at a partner institution (deemed a 'collaborative partnership'), the institutional submission may include delivery of accredited programmes to staff at the collaborative partner. If the collaborative partner institution is an Advance HE Full, International, Affiliate or International Affiliate Member successful participants will receive HEA Fellowship without an additional fee being due. If the collaborative partner institution is not an Advance member, successful participants will be charged an additional fee for HEA Fellowship, which is 50% of the current direct application fee (please see Section (ii) below).

Full details about the use of accredited programmes for staff at collaborative partner institutions must be included in the institutional submission to enable the accreditation panel to apply the accreditation criteria to the plans for delivery, support for participants and the fellowship judgement process relevant to this partnership arrangement (please refer to the [Guide to addressing the criteria for accreditation 2020-21](#) for the level of information required). Where an institution would like to add a new collaborative partner during the accreditation cycle the [Major/Minor Change Process](#) provides opportunity to extend accreditation to this arrangement.

Further options for how institutions can extend their accreditation provision are available through Advance HE's Global Strategic Partner membership package. The terms and conditions for this arrangement are set out in a Global Partnership policy, which articulates with this Advance HE accreditation policy. Please ask the Advance HE accreditation team (accreditation@advance-he.ac.uk) for further information.

Wherever offered, accredited programmes must be managed and quality assured by employees from the member institution with appropriate knowledge and understanding of the UKPSF. Full information about the arrangements are required within the submission (please refer to the [Guide to addressing the criteria for accreditation 2020-21](#) document for further information).

Accreditation does not cover provision that is developed for commercial sale by the member institution, i.e. provision is accredited to be accessed by the institution's employees and those employed by collaborative partner institutions only. An exception to this regulation is made with respect to individuals teaching and/or supporting HE learners within clinical/health profession settings, e.g. medical consultants, nurses, etc. As these individuals are likely to be employed by bodies other than HE Providers (e.g. NHS in UK), Advance HE member institutions may offer access to accredited programmes to these individuals, who will then be liable for an additional fee for HEA Fellowship when they successfully complete the programme (please see below).

Please refer to Section 8.2.2 above for a temporary exception to the standard Terms and Conditions relating to commercial offer of accredited APA programmes.

Advance HE offers a separate [Approvals service](#) for programmes intended for commercial sale.

(ii) The award of HEA Fellowship through completion of an accredited programme

Programme Leaders must supply Advance HE with accurate information about individuals who have successfully completed an accredited programme via the [My Advance HE](#) portal; HEA Fellowship is then awarded by Advance HE. There is no additional charge for the award of HEA Fellowship to participants who complete an accredited programme if they are employed by an Advance HE member institution, as the membership fee covers this cost.

Advance HE charges an additional fee for HEA Fellowship to individuals that are not employed by an Advance HE member institution at the end of the programme. The additional fee charged varies dependant on the category of HEA Fellowship sought, but is 50% of the full direct application fee; [current fees](#) are set out on the Advance HE website. It is the responsibility of the member institution to inform individuals enrolling onto an accredited programme about this fee.

Individuals applying for HEA Fellowship through accredited programmes are only entitled to receive the category of HEA Fellowship applied for, i.e. institutions must not award a different category of HEA Fellowship if an application does not meet the requirements of the category applied for. For

example, an unsuccessful application for Senior Fellowship (Descriptor 3) cannot be awarded Fellowship (Descriptor 2). In this instance a new application must be made that presents evidence to meet the distinctive nature of the relevant category. The only exception permitted occurs if an unsuccessful application for Fellowship (Descriptor 2) fully addresses the requirements for Associate Fellowship (Descriptor 1); in this instance if the requirements for the accredited application at Descriptor 1 are met, the institution may offer the applicant the choice of accepting Associate Fellowship (Descriptor 1) instead of resubmitting for Fellowship (Descriptor 2).

(iii) Definition of employment for professional recognition purposes

The employment status of staff at an institution is important as the institution's Advance HE membership with accreditation services covers HEA Fellowship fees for all employees that teach and support learning resulting from successful completion of accredited programmes. All Advance HE membership also subsidises the fees for direct application to Advance HE (50% of the full direct application fees).

HE Providers may operate a range of different contracts of employment e.g. permanent, fixed term, part time, fractional, Associate Lecturer, etc. Postgraduates may have a role in teaching and supporting learning 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. Any undergraduate students able to make a successful claim for HEA Fellowship are also covered by the institution's Advance HE membership when accreditation services are part of this membership.

If you are unsure about the employment status of any staff/participants on Advance HE accredited provision within your institution, Advance HE recommends that the HR Department at your institution should be consulted before seeking further guidance from the Advance HE accreditation team (accreditation@advance-he.ac.uk).

(iv) Eligibility for professional recognition in relation to national credit transfer systems

Institutions must ensure that HEA Fellowship is awarded to successful participants on accredited programmes on the basis of professional practice in teaching and/or support of learning in **Higher Education** at:

- + 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 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 professional learning staff may also be considered as evidence equivalent to the higher education academic frameworks.

Please contact the Advance HE accreditation team (accreditation@advance-he.ac.uk) for any queries relating to the eligibility of individuals for HEA Fellowship.



Contact us

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<https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/membership/teaching-and-learning-accreditation>

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