2020-21 Advance HE accreditation policy - summary of annual updates made to previous 2019-20 Advance HE accreditation policy

Submissions for accreditation must be made using the Advance HE Submission template 2020-21 and institutions should refer closely to the Guide to addressing the criteria for accreditation 2020-21 in conjunction with the Advance HE accreditation policy 2020-21 to develop their institutional submission in order to provide the information required to meet the criteria for accreditation. All these documents are available on the accreditation section of the Advance HE website.

The 2020-21 Advance HE accreditation policy will apply to all accreditation submissions made between 1 September 2020 and 31 August 2021. The 2020-21 version of the accreditation policy provides the annual update to previous 2019-20 Advance HE accreditation policy. The 2020-21 policy updates draw on the outcomes of Accreditation Panels in 2019-20, discussion with the sector during 2019-20 and wider Advance HE policy.

To ensure that all accreditation policy updates are clearly identifiable, this document sets out the changes incorporated into the Advance HE accreditation policy 2020-21 within the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2020-21 accreditation policy</th>
<th>Update for 2020-21</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Section 4.2, p.4</td>
<td>Clarification is added that one of the advocates for Principal Fellowship applicants should hold a category of fellowship.</td>
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<td>Section 4.4.1, p.7</td>
<td>Revised word counts for direct applications to Advance HE have been added into the table on p.7. This change reflects the new Context Statement which forms part of the direct application which now forms part of the application for Associate Fellowship, Fellowship and Senior Fellowship. The wording around equivalencies has been revised to require the format of assessment through which fellowship judgements are made to demonstrate equivalence to the requirements of the Reflective Account of Practice section of the direct application.</td>
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<td>Section 4.4.2, p.8</td>
<td>The reviewer requirements for Senior Fellow applications have been revised for 2020-21: Where an institution is experienced in the award of SFHEA, two (reduced from three from 1 August 2020 onwards) suitably trained and experienced reviewers independently review applications and reach a consensus decision; where a consensus judgement is not reached, a moderator/ third reviewer can be utilised to reach a majority judgement. Where the award of SFHEA is new to the institution, it remains 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).</td>
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### Section 4.6.5, p.10
Advance HE requirements for External appointments have been strengthened to emphasise that Externals must be impartial in judgement and wholly independent of the provider and its staff (QAA, 2018). Appointments must free from reciprocal external relationships and any 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 2019-20 accreditation policy introduced the need for a Term of Reference for External appointments, including a maximum term of office. ‘Fundamentals of External Examining’ (Advance HE, 2019) advises that in UK institutions an external examiner appointment is usually for four years and we would recommend that institutions consider this period as appropriate for appointment of Externals in accredited provision.

In addition, the 2020-21 policy includes that 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.

### Section 7.1, p.12
The External’s report will be required as part of the Annual CPD Review of accreditation from the 2019/20 annual review onwards.

### Section 8.1, p.13
A new Section 8.1 sets out Advance HE support for institutions to make temporary adjustments to accredited programmes in order to respond to the challenges faced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic without the need to apply to make a change to accredited provision.

### Section 8.2, p.13
Section 8.2 relates to the Academic Professional Apprenticeship (APA) which is eligible for levy funding in England. 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 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.

### Section 8.2.1, p.13
To continue to support Advance HE members during 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).

### Section 8.2.2, p.13-14
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 enrolee 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](mailto:accreditation@advance-he.ac.uk)) for further details.