

Guide to addressing the criteria for Approval 2020-22

To be read in conjunction with two other key documents:

1. Current [Advance HE accreditation policy](#)
2. **Advance HE submission Approval template 2020-22**

Introduction to Advance HE Approval

Advance HE Approval provides external and independent confirmation that a product or resource is aligned with the UK Professional Standards Framework for Teaching and Supporting Learning in Higher Education 2011 ([UKPSF](#)) and that engagement with the resource/product should help to generate evidence of effective professional practice that might be appropriate to use within an individual's application for an appropriate category of HEA fellowship, either made directly to Advance HE or through an Advance HE accredited programme/scheme at a later point.

The **Advance HE Approval Quality Kite Mark** is awarded to indicate that a resource/ product has met the three criteria for Approval. When awarded, Approval will be for a three-year period subject to an annual quality review. At the end of the three-year cycle, a new submission for Approval must be made. Use of the Approval Quality Kite Mark and the Terms and Conditions of Advance HE Approval are set out in a licensing agreement, which includes the schedule for payment of the annual Approval licence fee.

The [Six Steps to Advance HE Approval](#) guide outlines the different stages in the Approval process. The first stage is a **pre-Approval suitability review** of the resource/product. Once this stage has been successfully completed, the Provider can then progress to develop an application for Advance HE Approval via a documentary submission within the **Advance HE Approval submission template 2020-22**. This Guide to addressing the criteria for Approval 2020-22 document provides guidance to support the development of an Approval submission.

The Advance HE Approval submission template 2020-22 supports Providers (institutions/ businesses/ organisations/ professional bodies, etc.) in structuring their submission to present relevant information required to meet the criteria for Approval and is subject to periodic updates. The submission template comprises five parts and requires a Provider context commentary, plus a commentary and relevant participant-facing guidance for each product or resource being submitted for Approval. Incomplete submissions will be returned to the Provider, which may result in a postponed start date, as the submission will be then be allocated to a later Approval panel.

Approval Criteria

Criterion 1: The provider can evidence a commitment to the continuous development of those who teach and support learning

- a. The alignment of provider strategies and approaches to the development of those that teach and support learning with the UKPSF
- b. There is clear rationale for the resources/ products proposed consistent with the provider's approach to developing learning and teaching
- c. The mechanisms in place for monitoring and managing the quality assurance and enhancement of approved resources/ products at a provider level

Where relevant:

- d. The resources in place at the point of delivery that ensure effective and sustainable operation of the resources/ products appropriate to institutional strategy

Criterion 2: The resource/ product is designed to ensure participants utilise the UKPSF to both develop their practice and evidence their success

- a. The design of the resource/product provides explicit opportunities for participants to make clear associations between the resource/product, their practice and the relevant UKPSF Descriptor;
- b. The resource/product accurately reflects the relevant category of HEA Fellowship;

Criterion 3: 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 future fellowship claims supports participants to evidence their professional HE practices in line with the requirements of the relevant UKPSF Descriptor;

Where the resource/ product is a delivered/ taught programme also:

- c. those with responsibility for leading the programme and supporting participants can demonstrate current knowledge and understanding of the requirements of the relevant UKPSF Descriptor and application for HEA fellowship.

Advance HE Approval panel review and outcome

Advance HE Approval panels review application submissions against each of the three Approval criteria. Approval decisions are made by a panel of two independent reviewers chaired by a member of Advance HE staff. Reviewers 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 Approval panel process will lead to one of three Approval decisions being made for each resource/ product submitted as set out below:

1. Approval can be awarded

Feedback will include identification of good practice and may include recommendations for future development.

2. Approval can be awarded subject to conditions being met

The resource/ product can be Approved subject to conditions set by the Approval panel being met. Within the feedback, areas of good practice will be identified and panel conditions will be set out in an Approval action plan. The Provider 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 by the panel, 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 would need to be made at a later point and would incur a full review fee.

3. Returned for further development

Where the Approval panel judgement is that major development is required to meet the Approval criteria, the Provider will be issued with guidance to explain the outcome and provide support for a new submission. There is opportunity for the Provider to make a new submission at the next Approval submission deadline without a further fee. However, if the second Approval panel outcome is 'Returned for further development', any further submission will be charged at the full review fee.

Please note that the panel outcome is final and cannot be appealed; the basis for an appeal would need to be related to the Advance HE Approval process not being adhered to.

Award of Advance HE Approval

Once the outcome of the Approval Panel is that Approval can be awarded, Advance HE will review the Provider's marketing and website information to ensure that Advance HE Approval of the resource/ product is accurately portrayed. Once this is confirmed, the annual licensing agreement will be signed and the Advance HE Approval Quality Kite Mark awarded for a three-year period, subject to annual review.

Providers must provide an appropriate mechanism for an individual to make a complaint or to raise a matter of concern relating to an Approved resource/ product in a confidential manner, and for this concern to be investigated without disadvantage. If an individual makes a complaint to Advance HE regarding their experience with an Approved resource/ product/ programme, Advance HE will point the complainant to the appeals and/or complaints procedure at Approved Provider, but reserves the right to intervene in instances where a complaint/appeal might relate to Advance HE standards or deviation from the Approved documentation/ process. Should a complaint relate to a potential compromise of Advance HE 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 Approval.

Other Advance HE guidance resources available to support submissions

There are a variety of Advance HE guidance documents that providers are welcome to use, adapt and link to in order to provide accurate guidance for participants about the UKPSF and fellowship within their resource/product:

- Advance HE [Dimensions of the Framework guidance](#) documents set out typical examples of practice that demonstrate successful engagement with the UKPSF Dimensions at Descriptor 1-3 within different contexts. These will be useful for the team developing the resource/ product to consider so that activities/ examples used are appropriate to the relevant Descriptor.
- Links to Advance resources for fellowship applicants and referees are:
 - [Associate Fellow](#) (Descriptor 1)
 - [Fellow](#) (Descriptor 2)
 - [Senior Fellow](#) (Descriptor 3)
 - [Principal Fellow](#).(Descriptor 4)
- The Fellowship Category Tool is designed to support individuals to identify the most appropriate category of fellowship to suit their practice and experience; it is freely available for individuals and providers to use on our [website](#).

Completing the Approval submission template

There are three parts to the Approval submission template:

Part C: Provider context (Approval criterion 1)

Part D: Provider narrative on the individual product/ resource (Approval criteria 2-3)

Part E: Appendices – including participant-facing guidance (Approval criteria 2-3)

This guidance document aims to identify what type of information should be provided to address the Approval criteria and where this information should be located in the submission, i.e. whether information should be included within the participant-facing guidance (Part E) or within the provider commentary (Parts C and D).

Information should not be duplicated i.e. information provided within the guidance participants receive should not be repeated within the provider commentary. **Clear signposting/cross referencing** will aid the reader to locate the relevant information easily, i.e. the peer reviewers will review the submission as a whole against the three criteria.

Tables are used throughout the rest of this guidance document to provide a clear comparison of which section of the template (Part D or Part E) should contain the relevant information. **NB: Where appropriate, please use diagrams/tables/infographics/etc. to present information succinctly throughout the submission.**

Guidance for information to include in Part C of the Approval submission template

The purpose of this section of the submission is to provide the Provider's context which underpins all the product/resource submitted (approval criterion 1). **This section should be used to:**

- Set the context for the submission to enable the Approval panel members to understand the Provider's approach to learning and teaching and related key strategic objectives and ambitions;
- Explain how the Provider uses the UK Professional Standards Framework (2011) and HEA fellowship to promote good practice in learning and teaching within the Provider context;
- Set out the structure and rationale for the provision (products/ resources) to be approved. Where the Provider has previously been operating Approved provision, this section will also evaluate the previous Approval cycle and discuss how this underpins the rationale for the provision to be approved in the next cycle;
- Make clear the resource that the Provider is committing to in order to meet Provider objectives;

- Explain how the Provider will monitor and manage the quality of the product/ resource and where relevant the delivery and participant experience.

Please **only include extracts of relevant Provider policy/strategy documents** at the appropriate point in the provider commentary (Part C) to provide pertinent information/evidence. **Full policy/strategy documents are NOT required.** For example, **do not include** full policy documents/strategy documents/corporate plans/quality monitoring reports/quality reviews/agendas or minutes of meetings/External reports, etc. Please **do not repeat any information**; cross reference back to the first instance if/where appropriate.

Due to the varied nature of providers from educational institutions to commercial businesses, some prompts in the tables below will not apply. Please focus on those that are relevant to your context. Further guidance can be provided on individual situations.

Commentary for Part C	
Brief outline of the provider context	<p>Provide a brief overview of key provider details relevant to the submitted product/ resource(s); these may include the provider's type/size and structure, number and types of staff and students, discipline specialisms, relationship of teaching/research, experience in providing products/ resources of this type etc.</p> <p>If any product/ resource is to be offered beyond the host provider, please provide further explanation as well as the plans for use, commercial sale, delivery/management and infrastructure supporting the product/ resource.</p>
Criterion 1 – The Provider can evidence a commitment to the continuous professional development of those that teach and support learning	
1a. The alignment of Provider strategies and approaches to the development of those that teach and support learning with the UKPSF	<p>Explain how Provider strategies, approaches and priorities encourage and motivate participants to engage in opportunities for professional development related to teaching and supporting learning aligned to the UKPSF.</p> <p>Use selective evidence extracted from Provider strategies and priorities to illustrate the Provider's approach to the development of those that teach and support learning. This could include extracts to demonstrate how the Provider is already explicitly utilising/interpreting the UKPSF to promote the development of teaching and</p>

	<p>learning. For example, you could use selective extracts from Provider mission statement/Provider vision/strategy/policy/ethos/principles, etc. related to teaching and supporting learning</p>
<p>1b. There is clear rationale for the proposed accredited product/ resource(s) consistent with the Provider’s approach to learning and teaching.</p>	<p>Clearly identify the different product/resource in the submission and explain how these articulate to provide optimum initial and on-going opportunities for the wide range of professional development needs of the target audience that teach and support learning within the specific provider context (a diagram may be helpful to support the commentary).</p> <p>Where product/resource have been previously approved at the Provider, it is expected that a thorough evaluation of the previous approval cycle will be part of the rationale presented.</p>
<p>1c. Quality assurance and enhancement of approved product/resource are monitored and managed at a provider level.</p>	<p>Explain how the Provider will monitor and manage the quality of the product/ resource and where relevant the delivery and participant experience.</p> <p>Where appropriate, Approval criterion 3c requires the product/ resource delivery team to engage in initial training and regular updating activities (e.g. standardisation/calibration of judgements) to ensure that their knowledge and understanding of the requirements of the UKPSF and fellowship remains current and appropriate. Approval criterion 1c requires the Provider to explain how it will plan and manage appropriate training and regular updating activities for product/ resource delivery teams and to explain how individuals’ engagement in these activities will be monitored and managed at a provider level.</p>
<p><i>Where relevant:</i></p> <p>1d. There are sufficient resources in place for each site of delivery to ensure effective and sustainable operation of the product/resource appropriate to provider strategy.</p>	<p>Provide information about the provider capacity (structures, systems, resources, staff with appropriate fellowship, etc.) in place to deliver the product/resource and to support participants.</p> <p>It is recommended that a table with future projections of numbers for the next 2 years (including at each site of delivery) should be included to enable the Approval panel to review the capacity in place to successfully operate the provision in line with future plans.</p>

Guidance for information to include in the commentary (Part D) and participant-facing guidance (Part E)

The purpose of Parts D and E of the Approval submission template is for you to provide information to address Approval criteria 2 and 3 individually **for each product/ resource presented** for approval.

The Approval panel will take a **participant-facing viewpoint** when considering your submission; therefore, the guidance provided for participants and/or facilitators (Part E of the submission) forms a key part of the submission and will be reviewed as vital contributory evidence towards meeting Approval criteria 2-3.

Broadly, it is expected that:

- the design of the product/resource ensures that engagement with UKPSF will be an explicit part of the participant experience;
- participants will be appropriately guided to generate relevant evidence of professional practice for future fellowship claims;

The Panel understands that each product/ resource is designed to suit the context, priorities and purpose of the Provider and the development needs of its different target audience. Therefore, the guidance that participants receive on a product/ resource (such as handbooks, etc.) might take many different forms. Where guidance to participants is on-line and not in the format of a 'handbook', please collate this information in some logical order/ use screen shots with an accompanying narrative to ensure that the information identified below is provided in full. **Tables/flow charts/diagrams, etc. are welcomed** and please use these to add clarity and aid understanding wherever appropriate.

You will see in the guidance notes provided in the tables below that we indicate what is likely to be explained in the participant-facing documentation (Part E) and what you may wish to include in the supporting commentary (Part D).

In general, the information you give within the commentary provides rationale for the choices you have made and should refer to and signpost information within the documents (for example, using specific page references in handbooks) - **it should NOT duplicate this information and please cross-reference to participant guidance where applicable.**

NB. When referring to 'participant-facing documents', we include within this guidance for other stakeholders such as facilitators/ tutors.

Important to note

- Please **do** submit participant handbooks/full participant-facing guidance (e.g. product/ resource/course handbooks, etc.), facilitator/ tutor guidance that provides the information identified below;
- Please **do** link to Advance HE applicant guidance and other Advance HE resources where appropriate rather than duplicating information/ paraphrasing requirements, as this will ensure that information remains accurate and current;
- Please **do not** submit additional information such as product/ resource specifications, module Descriptors, PowerPoint presentations, marketing materials, staff CVs, full strategy/policy documents, etc.;
- Please **do not** combine all submission documents into one large file but submit as individual documents; please name the documents appropriately and include a list in Section E of the submission template. Please also remember to include page numbers in each document. Panel members may choose to print your submission so please use a font size that is easy to read in hard copy (e.g. minimum size of Arial 11).
- Please **do** proofread final documents carefully, as Approval Panels frequently note some inconsistencies/inaccuracies in product/ resource level documentation that had been missed by proof reading. Frequent examples included references to the wrong Descriptor in participant handbooks, probably as a result of copying and pasting information between guidance for each category. It is strongly recommended that documents are carefully proof read and cross checked to ensure accuracy and consistency of information

Please contact the Advance HE accreditation team if you have any queries (accreditation@advance-he.ac.uk or 01904 717500)

Criterion 2 - The product/ resource is designed to ensure participants utilise the UKPSF to both develop their practice and evidence their success

Criterion element	Participant-facing guidance (Part E)	Supporting commentary (Part D)
<p>2a. The design of the product/ resource provides explicit opportunities for participants to make clear associations between the product/ resource, their practice and the relevant UKPSF Descriptor</p>	<p>Provide guidance for participants to help them determine the most appropriate category of HEA fellowship and the optimum route that will enable them to use the resource/product together with their professional practice in supporting their future achievement of this. The guidance should be inclusive for all groups of participants that wish to apply for recognition. Information about the Advance HE Fellowship Category Tool may be helpful to include along with guidance about the routes to fellowship available through direct application to Advance HE.</p> <p>Explain that the UKPSF consists of two elements – the Dimensions of the Framework and the four Descriptor statements. The Descriptors incorporate the UKPSF Dimensions and so the full Descriptor (and not simply the Dimensions) must be included in the guidance. Guidance needs to fully and accurately explain the requirements of the relevant Descriptor(s). The Advance HE Dimensions of the Framework series of documents provide typical examples of successful engagement with the PSF Dimensions at Descriptors 1-3 and these documents might be helpful for Providers to utilise when constructing guidance for participants. This will help participants to understand how successful engagement with the Dimensions will be evidenced at the distinctive Descriptor chosen for Approval.</p>	<p>Outline the activities which will be used to introduce and explain the UKPSF and explain the requirements of the relevant category(s) of fellowship.</p> <p>If the product/ resource is offered at different sites/to different groups of participants/by different modes of delivery, outline any differences in the design/structure of the product/ resource and opportunities provided for participants (cross reference to information provided for provider context in Part C).</p> <p>Outline any activities/opportunities that articulate with the product/ resource to offer supplementary development (where appropriate) and progression/CPD after completion of this product/ resource as appropriate.</p>

Explain how the product/ resource has been designed and structured to develop and support participants' professional practices and knowledge aligned to the requirements of the relevant Descriptor. Explain how engagement with the learning resource/ product along with the participants' professional experience in teaching and/or support of learning can be drawn on towards appropriate evidence of effective practice within an application for fellowship at the appropriate point. For example, in a structured online resource targeted at early career educators working towards making an Associate Fellowship claim directly to Advance HE, the handbook should make clear how the resource has been designed to ensure that participants will engage with all Descriptor 1 criteria and how participants will be guided to apply the learning from the resource to their own practice thus building their evidence base that can subsequently be used to evidence Descriptor 1.

Embed and signpost meaningful opportunities for engagement with the UKPSF within the design of the product/ resource so that it will be clear to participants where they will engage with the framework throughout their experience. For example, a product/ resource handbook will indicate where meaningful engagement with each Dimension will occur within weekly schedules and tasks.

If there are different routes through the provision (e.g. routes that may lead to an application for either Associate Fellowship or Fellowship within a product/ resource) ensure that these are fully explained so that it is clear what the participant will engage with and how they are supported. In each instance the relevant Descriptor must be included in full within the guidance process.

<p>2b. The product/ resource accurately reflects the relevant category of HEA Fellowship</p> <p><i>Cross reference to policy Sections 4.2</i></p>	<p>It is key that the requirements of the Descriptor(s) are accurately portrayed and where more than one Descriptor is included within the product/ resource (e.g. a product/ resource aligned to Fellowship with Associate Fellowship embedded as a first stage) there is appropriate and explicit differentiation between the distinctive requirements of each Descriptor within the design of the product/ resource.</p> <p>Guidance needs to enable participants to understand the requirements of the relevant Descriptor(s) and how the product/ resource is designed to enable them to work towards these requirements within this product/ resource. Guidance needs to clearly reflect that evidence of engagement with the Dimensions will take different forms depending on the Descriptor being evidenced; i.e. the scope/scale of practice and impact on students/ the practices of colleagues will be different. (Please refer to the Dimensions of the Framework guidance documents for examples to illustrate this).</p> <p>Provide guidance to participants explaining that they must have sufficient genuine practice in HE teaching and learning to be able to evidence the relevant Descriptor before they make a fellowship application (e.g. direct application to Advance HE). Explain how referee statements are also required to endorse an application.</p>	<p>Identify the types of participants expected to engage with or use this product/ resource and make clear that this product/ resource supports their development towards an appropriate category of fellowship for these individuals.</p> <p>Explain how it is ensured that participants enrolling onto the product/ resource will be advised about the requirements to have sufficient appropriate professional practice in teaching and/or supporting learning (at an appropriate HE level) before being able to make a full claim against the requirements of the relevant Descriptor. They will need to be able to relate their learning and development undertaken through engaging with the product/ resource to their own effective practice and draw from this in making their claim.</p> <p>Guidance should be provided to support participants in understanding the requirements to authenticate practice in fellowship applications e.g. via referee statements.</p>
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Criterion 3 – The support and guidance provided will enable participants to utilise the UKPSF to develop and evidence their practice

Criterion element	Participant-facing guidance (Part E)	Supporting commentary in template (Part D)
<p>3a. Participants are supported to make clear associations between their professional development opportunities, their practice and the appropriate category of fellowship</p>	<p>There is clear guidance for participants to recognise the opportunities for meaningful engagement with the Dimensions of the Framework (as appropriate to the requirements of the relevant Descriptor) whilst engaging with the product/ resource. Guidance should support participants to make explicit links between their practice, the UKPSF and their professional development at the appropriate category of HEA Fellowship. (<i>The Dimensions of the Framework guidance documents should be useful when writing participant guidance appropriate to Descriptors 1-3</i>).</p> <p>The mechanisms in place to provide support to participants to make links between their engagement with the resource/ product and the UKPSF (such as tutor/ facilitator) should be fully explained. Any differences in the support offered on different sites should be clearly explained.</p>	<p>Outline any strategies which will be implemented to support participants to make links between their development on the product/ resource, their practice and the appropriate category of fellowship. For example, this could include the tutor/ facilitator support provided.</p> <p>Confirm that support mechanisms on offer provide equivalent help for participants on all sites/modes of delivery (where appropriate).</p>
<p>3b. Guidance relating to future fellowship claims supports participants to evidence their professional HE practice in line with the requirements of the relevant UKPSF Descriptor</p>	<p>Participants need to be clearly informed about how they can use their learning from engaging with the product/ resource (e.g. tasks, activities, prompts to relate theory to practice) together with their</p>	<p>Indicate ways in which participants are supported to make clear links between their practice, the product/ resource and the requirements of fellowship. For example, there may be opportunity for formative feedback, self-assessment, tasks, etc.</p>

	<p>professional practice can generate evidence aligned to the requirements of the relevant Descriptor;</p> <p>On a structured product/ resource, a planning tool could be included (if one is used) to enable participants to self-plan and track progress.</p> <p>Participants progressing towards Associate Fellowship should be provided with specific guidance/support about how to select which two Areas of Activity to evidence (along with K1 and K2 plus associated Professional Values).</p>	
<p><i>Where the resource/ product is a delivered/ taught programme also complete relevant aspects of criterion 3c</i></p>		
<p>3c. Those with responsibility for leading the programme and supporting participants can demonstrate current knowledge and understanding of the requirements of the relevant UKPSF Descriptor and application for HEA fellowship.</p>	<p>Information regarding tutor/ facilitator fellowship status may be listed in participant-facing product/ resource handbooks. Guidance should also explain how any others who provide support to participants e.g. mentors/ work-place supervisors, etc. are allocated and how this support will operate. Where there is a handbook/distinct guidance provided for these supporters relevant to the UKPSF element of their role please include this within Part E of the submission.</p>	<p>Identify the members of the core delivery team and any others that provide support for participants to engage with the UKPSF and advise about fellowship.</p> <p>Include the fellowship status of key staff leading the delivery of the product/ resource. Confirm that the product/ resource leader and team members (including on other sites) engage in appropriate UKPSF-related CPD activities to ensure that participants are supported by staff with appropriate current knowledge and understanding of the UKPSF (2011) and requirements of the relevant Descriptor(s). Explain how the engagement of individuals in this CPD is monitored and managed at Provider level (link to criterion 1c).</p> <p>Outline the approach taken to selecting appropriate others who support participants whilst they engage with</p>

		the resource/ product and the CPD provided, which ensure that these individuals remain current in their understanding of the requirements of the relevant category of Fellowship as appropriate to their role. Explain how the engagement of individuals in this CPD is monitored and managed at provider level (link to criterion 1c).
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Any queries

Please contact the Advance HE accreditation team by email at accreditation@advance-he.ac.uk or by phone on 01904 717500 if you have any further queries.