

Advance HE Accreditation Policy 2026-27

Advance HE accredits programmes for the initial and continuing professional development (CPD) of staff that teach and support learning in higher education providers globally. [Advance HE accreditation](#) provides external and independent confirmation that professional development is aligned with the Professional Standards Framework for Teaching and Supporting Learning in Higher Education 2023 ([PSF 2023](#)) and provides participants with the opportunity to be professionally recognised for their effective higher education practice through the [Fellowship](#) scheme.

Each category of fellowship requires a commitment to continuing professional development and accredited institutions should provide ongoing developmental opportunities for all staff that teach and/or support learning.

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.

1. Policy statement

Advance HE aims to operate a flexible and proportionate accreditation service whilst maintaining the credibility and reliability of accreditation outcomes. 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 2026-27](#) draws on this policy and sets out the information required to address the accreditation criteria within an institutional submission. [Advance HE accreditation submission templates](#) need to be used when applying for accreditation.

2. Terms of accreditation

Accreditation is only available to Advance HE Strategic Member institutions that pay for accreditation services as part of their institutional membership; Advance HE Access membership does not include accreditation services.

The full Terms and Conditions of accreditation are set out in Appendix 1 of this policy and accreditation must operate in line with these.

2.1 Accreditation submission deadlines

Accreditation can commence on 1 September, 1 January, 1 February or 1 May of each year and is awarded for a set period termed an 'accreditation cycle' (see Appendix 1ii). The following accreditation submission deadlines and associated start dates apply:

Accreditation submission deadline	Earliest programme start date
30 September 2026	1 January 2027
31 October 2026	1 February 2027
31 January 2027	1 May 2027
31 March 2027	1 September 2027
30 September 2027	1 January 2028
31 October 2027	1 February 2028

Accreditation should be confirmed prior to the programme start date and accreditation start dates cannot be backdated.

2.2 Institutions new to Advance HE accreditation

Institutions considering Advance HE accreditation for the first time are asked to contact the accreditation team (accreditation@advance-he.ac.uk) for further guidance about the process, requirements and support in place. An appropriate timeline for submission will be agreed and a Panel review place booked.

Institutions new to accreditation will be initially accredited for a 12-month period (see Appendix 1ii).

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 2026-27](#) provides full explanation about the information required within the institutional submission.

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 PSF.
- 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 PSF 2023 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 PSF 2023 Descriptor.
- b. the programme accurately reflects the relevant category of fellowship.
- c. the design of assessment ensures that participants will explicitly evidence effective practice to meet the criteria of the relevant PSF 2023 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 PSF 2023 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 fellowship.
- b. guidance relating to assessment supports participants to evidence their professional HE practice in line with the requirements of the relevant PSF 2023 Descriptor.
- c. those with responsibility for the management and operation of the programme hold an appropriate category of fellowship and can demonstrate continuing development in relation to fellowship.
- d. those with responsibility for supporting participants can demonstrate current knowledge and understanding of the requirements for the relevant category of 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 PSF 2023 Descriptor(s):

- a. judgements are made against the relevant PSF 2023 Descriptor criteria.
- b. all individuals involved in the fellowship judgement process:
 - o hold an appropriate category of fellowship.
 - o are suitably trained to make fellowship judgements for the relevant category of Fellowship.
 - o can demonstrate current knowledge and understanding of the requirements for the relevant category of 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 should be evidenced within the accreditation submission and operate as accredited.

4.1 Institutional commitment to PSF-related CPD for those supporting accredited provision

To ensure that programme teams, mentors and internal reviewers/assessors remain current in their knowledge and understanding of the requirements of the PSF and Fellowship, the institution must demonstrate how engagement of all these individuals in initial training and regular ongoing PSF-related CPD is managed (accreditation criterion 1c).

4.2 Authentication of practice

As the award of Fellowship is based on evidence of effective higher education practice appropriate to the relevant Descriptor, all accredited programmes should be designed to include a means to authenticate each participant's practice as set out below. Referees, Advocates and Observers must comment on their current/ recent experience of the participant's professional practice and be free from any conflict of interest (e.g. not be a family member, close friend, etc.).

Category of Fellowship	Advance HE requirements for authentication of practice
Associate Fellow	One Supporting Statement verifying that the application presents a fair and honest reflection of the participant's practice in line PSF 2023 Descriptor 1. OR A formal observation of practice by an experienced peer who has current knowledge and understanding of the requirements of PSF 2023 Descriptor 1.
Fellow	Two Supporting Statements verifying that the application presents a fair and honest reflection of the participant's practice in line with PSF 2023 Descriptor 2. OR A formal observation of practice by an experienced peer who has current knowledge and understanding of the requirements of PSF 2023 Descriptor 2.
Senior Fellow	Two Supporting Statements verifying that the application presents a fair and honest reflection of the participant's practice in line with PSF 2023 Descriptor 3.
Principal Fellow	Two Advocate Statements recommending the applicant for Principal Fellowship. One 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.

*Supporting Statements and Advocate Statements need to be unique to the applicant

As accreditation confers the responsibility to award Fellowships on behalf of Advance HE, institutions must require individuals applying for 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.

4.3 Guidance and support for participants

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 2026-27](#) document sets out the information required.

4.3.2 Ensuring participants undertake an appropriate route to fellowship

Institutions should ensure that participants are supported to identify the appropriate category of fellowship to suit their practice and experience. As fellowships are awarded on the basis of an individual's effective practice, when enrolling participants onto programmes institutions need to 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 PSF 2023 Descriptor.

4.4 Fellowship judgements

4.4.1 Format of the assessment

Institutions may design the format of the assessment through which fellowship judgements are made but do need to demonstrate **equivalence** to the requirements of the **Reflective Account of Practice** in a written direct application to Advance HE for each category of Fellowship as listed below. The [Guide to addressing the criteria for accreditation 2026-27](#) illustrates how other formats of assessment might reflect equivalence to the written direct application for each category of fellowship.

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 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 Context Statement (up to 300 words) and citations (up to 500 words).

4.4.2 Fellowship judgement process

Institutional processes must result in reliable and robust fellowship judgements being made by reviewers/assessors holding appropriate fellowship status and demonstrating current knowledge and understanding of the requirements of the relevant PSF 2023 Descriptor. Appropriate moderation should be in place to ensure consistency and appropriateness across all fellowship judgements (see Section 4.6).

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

Academic credit-bearing programmes	
Fellowship judgement	Reviewer/assessor requirements
Associate Fellow (D1) Fellow (D2)	If the quality assurance processes of an academic credit-bearing programme explicitly consider fellowship judgements, one suitably trained and experienced Fellow or Senior Fellow or Principal Fellow is required plus internal moderation through sampling in line with institutional policy carried out by a second internal assessor who is a Fellow or Senior Fellow or Principal Fellow. Where academic credit-bearing programmes do not have formal institutional quality assurance processes to explicitly consider Fellowship judgements, two suitably trained and experienced assessors, each a Fellow or Senior Fellow or Principal Fellow, are required. Where a structured taught programme adheres to the same institutional quality assurance and enhancement processes as a structured academic-credit-bearing programme (e.g. Postgraduate Certificate) but does not award academic credit, please contact the accreditation team (accreditation@advance-he.ac.uk) to discuss assessor requirements.
All other accredited programmes/schemes	
Fellowship judgement	Reviewer requirements
Associate Fellow (D1)	Two suitably trained and experienced reviewers independently review applications and reach a consensus judgement; reviewers must hold a category of fellowship; this includes Associate Fellows with relevant experience.
Fellow (D2)	Two suitably trained and experienced reviewers independently review applications and reach a consensus judgement; each reviewer must be a Fellow or Senior Fellow or Principal Fellow.
Senior Fellow (D3)	Where an institution is experienced in the award of Senior Fellowship, two suitably trained and experienced reviewers independently review applications and reach a consensus decision; all reviewers must be a Senior Fellow or Principal Fellow. Where the award of Senior Fellowship is new to the institution, it is a requirement that three reviewers (each a Senior or Principal Fellow) independently review applications and reach a majority decision with one of the three reviewers being a suitably experienced Fellowship External (see Section 4.6.2).
Principal Fellow (D4)	Three suitably trained and experienced reviewers (two internal and one external); all must be Principal Fellows.

4.4.3 Conflict of interest

The fellowship judgement process must be free of any conflict of interest, e.g. mentors/coaches should not be involved in the 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 should ensure that sufficient evidence of effective practice is presented to

fully meet the requirements of the relevant category of Fellowship by the end of the programme. Evidence presented for the fellowship judgement should include authentication of practice.

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

4.6 Role of the Fellowship External

To ensure reliable 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 should appoint an appropriate Fellowship External (one or more individuals) to fulfil the following functions as identified in Sections 4.6.1-4.6.4 below:

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

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

4.6.2 Fellowship 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 a **Fellowship 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 Advance HE Minor Changes Process, to revise the Fellowship 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 Fellowship External moderation of fellowship judgements for all Descriptors 1-3 programmes: Applications for Fellowship/programme assessment leading to the award of Fellowship (Descriptors 1-3) should be **moderated by the Fellowship 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, formats of assessment and different assessors to ensure the consistency and appropriateness of fellowship judgements. The Fellowship External 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 2026-27](#) and the Fellowship External Resource pack (on Accredited Programme Leader Network Connect site for further guidance).

4.6.4 Formal reporting on the quality of accredited programmes by Fellowship External

Appropriate institutional quality mechanisms should embed **formal reporting** by the Fellowship External 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. The formal Fellowship External report should be considered and responded to through the accredited institution-level quality governance system.

4.6.5 Advance HE requirements for Fellowship External appointments

The Fellowship External 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 Fellowship External appointees are:

- Senior or Principal Fellows.
- suitably experienced in making fellowship judgements and current in their knowledge and understanding of the requirements of PSF 2023 and 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 appointment the Fellowship External should be governed by a Terms of Reference, including a maximum term in post (normally 4 years).

4.6.6 Data Protection Act (DPA) and the Fellowship External

In the UK, the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2019 legislation means that a Fellowship External acting on behalf of a UK institution will act as a 'Data Processor' for the institution's data, i.e. the institution will provide the Fellowship External with data. UK institutions will need to ensure that Fellowship 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 includes:

- fully completed accreditation submission templates endorsed by the institutional signatory.
- stakeholder-facing guidance for each programme.

The documentation is submitted in a series of zipped folders via Advance HE's Survey Monkey Apply (SMA) system. Institutions applying for (re)accreditation will be emailed guidance to support their use of SMA. Incomplete submissions will be returned to the institution, which may result in a postponed start date, as the submission is likely to 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, comprising independent peer reviewers and an Advance HE Chair, with an additional and an Advance HE staff member supporting some panel meetings. Peer 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 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 four working weeks, 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 four working weeks.

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 to support further development. Panel feedback will set out a timeline for a new submission of the programme(s) to be made without a fee being due.

A new submission will undergo a full review process by a new accreditation panel. If the new 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 data report for accredited CPD schemes

Advance HE requires institutions with accredited CPD schemes to complete a short annual data report. Failure to return a fully completed data report by the deadline set may result in accreditation being suspended. Currently Advance HE does not require an annual data report for institutions that only have accredited taught programmes.

7.2 Advance HE quality assurance monitoring

For quality assurance purposes, Advance HE can request all documentation relating to an award of fellowship made through an accredited programme or scheme (e.g. full application, completed review proformas, committee minutes, etc.).

Institutions are asked to maintain an archive of written applications/ oral recordings, outcomes and feedback to applicants for a period of three years.

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. A fee of £3,155 is charged for review of a Major Change but Minor Changes do not incur a fee. In the first instance, institutions should contact the accreditation team (accreditation@advance-he.ac.uk) to ask for an Initial Change Request Form.

Institutions new to accreditation should successfully complete the initial 12-month accreditation period before a Major change to the provision accredited can be considered.

A Major Change to an accredited Postgraduate Certificate programme, or modules within one, in order to meet the requirements of the Academic Role Apprenticeship (Level 7) in England will not incur a charge; however, a fee of £6,310 applies should a new programme be submitted for accreditation outside the institution's accreditation/reaccreditation cycle (see Appendix 1i).

Changes proposed by an institution should 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.

Appendix 1 - Accreditation Terms and Conditions

(i) Advance HE membership and access to accreditation services

Accreditation is only available to Advance HE Strategic Member institutions paying for accreditation services; Advance HE Access 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 fellowship. The institution is responsible for communicating the change to any participants who are part way through a programme.

(ii) Period of accreditation

Once awarded, accreditation will be in place for a set period ('accreditation cycle'), providing that appropriate Advance membership is maintained, after which a new submission for accreditation will be required.

Advance HE membership that includes accreditation services entitles institutions to make one free accreditation submission, consisting of up to five programmes/schemes, in each accreditation cycle. For institutions reaccrediting from 2025 onwards, the accreditation cycle is five years, with the option for institutions to choose to reaccredit after four years without a fee being due by negotiation with Advance HE. Institutions wishing to present additional programmes before their agreed reaccreditation date will be liable for a fee per submission of up to five programmes. In 2026-27, the fee is £6,310. Please ask the Advance HE accreditation team for further information (accreditation@advance-he.ac.uk).

Institutions new to accreditation will be initially accredited for a 12-month period, during which time Advance HE will support 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 four years. Institutions new to accreditation must successfully complete the initial reporting period before any further submission (which would incur a £6,310 fee) can be considered.

(iii) Use of accredited programmes at different sites

The terms and conditions of accreditation enable institutions to offer their accredited programmes to staff employed across any of their sites. Full details should be included within the institutional submission (please refer to the [Guide to addressing the criteria for accreditation 2026-27](#)). Advance HE Strategic 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 should 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.

(iv) Use of accredited provision with collaborative partner institutions

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 member (Strategic or Access), successful participants will receive 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 fellowship, which is 50% of the current direct application fee (please see Section (viii) below).

Full details about the use of accredited programmes for staff at collaborative partner institutions should 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 2026-27](#) for the level of information required).

Where an institution would like to add a new collaborative partner during the accreditation cycle the Minor Change Process provides opportunity to extend accreditation to this arrangement. Please contact the accreditation team (accreditation@advance-he.ac.uk) to ask for an Initial Change Request Form.

Wherever offered, accredited programmes must be managed, assessed and quality assured by employees from the member institution with appropriate knowledge and understanding of the PSF 2023. Full information about the arrangements are required within the submission (please refer to the [Guide to addressing the criteria for accreditation 2026-27](#) document for further information).

(v) Advance HE Global Membership

Accredited institutions that have successfully completed at least one accreditation cycle are able to apply to extend use of their accredited programmes through Advance HE's Global Membership arrangements. The terms and conditions for this arrangement are set out in the Advance HE Global Membership policy, which articulates with this Advance HE accreditation policy. Please ask the Advance HE accreditation team (accreditation@advance-he.ac.uk) for further information.

(vi) Commercial sale

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, iv and vii).

Accreditation does not cover provision that is developed for commercial sale by the member institution, i.e. programmes offered to external participants, other than staff at collaborative partners and clinical educators, are not eligible to be accredited. Advance HE offers a separate [Approvals service](#) for programmes intended for commercial sale.

(vii) Use of accredited programmes with educators in health profession settings

An exception to the regulation around commercial sale (Appendix 1vi above) 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 Fellowship when they successfully complete the programme (please see Appendix 1iv above).

(viii) Fee for award of 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; fellowship is then awarded by Advance HE. There is no additional charge for the award of fellowship to participants who complete an accredited programme if they are employed by an Advance HE member institution, as the institutional membership fee covers this cost.

Advance HE charges an additional fee for 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 fellowship sought but is 50% of the full direct application fee; [current fellowship 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. Please note that Terms and Conditions around commercial sale apply (Appendix 1vi above) and this fee only applies to participants that sit within those terms but are not employed by a member institution.

(ix) Definition of employment for Fellowship purposes

The employment status of staff at an institution is important as the institution's Advance HE membership with accreditation services covers Fellowship fees for all employees that teach and support learning resulting from successful completion of accredited programmes. All types of institutional Advance HE membership also subsidise 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. If clinical educators or other industry-based professionals are able to prove that they are working directly with the accredited member institution's own HE students, they may be classed as 'employed' by that accredited institution for the purposes of fellowship, whether paid or unpaid for the educational role they take.

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 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).

(x) Category of fellowship awarded

Individuals applying for Fellowship through accredited programmes are only entitled to receive the category of Fellowship applied for, i.e. institutions must not award a different category of 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 should 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).

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

Institutions must ensure that 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 Fellowship.

(xii) Time limit for fellowship to be awarded post-completion of an accredited programme

As the award of fellowship is based on evidence of current/ recent educational practice meeting the requirements of the Professional Standards Framework (PSF), from 01 January 2027 there will be a time limit of 5 years from completion of an accredited programme for an individual to be able to claim a fellowship.

(xiii) Advance HE Code of Practice for Fellowship

The [Advance HE Code of Practice for Fellowship](#) sets out principles and expectations for Fellows and Advance HE reserves the right to remove an individual's 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.

(xiv) Appeals, complaints and matters of concern

Institutions should provide an appropriate mechanism for an individual to raise an appeal and/or complaint or a matter of concern relating to an accredited programme in a confidential manner; if

raised, an investigation should take place in a timely and fair manner, in line with relevant institutional policies.

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.

(xv) Data protection

Section 8 of the Advance HE: Membership Packages terms and conditions (worldwide) [2026-27](#) sets out the obligations for institutions and Advance HE in protecting personal data that is shared for participants undertaking accredited programmes and institutional staff supporting accredited provision (defined within EU General Data Protection Regulation legislation as a Data Controller to Data Controller relationship).

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