

UCL Arena

Principal Fellowship

Guidance for Applicants



Welcome

The UCL Arena Team welcomes you to our community of UCL staff and students who advance research-based education in their teaching and learning support roles. UCL colleagues have found the process of preparing their applications for fellowships of the Higher Education Academy through the Arena scheme rewarding and self-affirming, and we wish you well with your application.

The award of Principal Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy is prestigious; there are fewer than 200 Principal Fellows in the UK (2015). It recognises exceptional educational leadership and impact in the higher education sector. A successful application for Principal Fellowship will entitle you to Principal Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy and the postnominal letters 'PFHEA', and also to recognition as a UCL Arena Principal Fellow.

Principal Fellow (PFHEA) Application process

If you are considering an application for PFHEA the first thing to do is contact the Arena Centre at:

arena.open@ucl.ac.uk

You will be put in touch with one of the PFHEA mentors who will ask you to complete a first draft of the Record of Educational Impact (REI) which can be found in the Initial Guidance form for Principal Fellow of the HEA. Having completed that, you should meet with your mentor and discuss whether there is enough evidence to support an application for PFHEA. If there is, you will need to work on your application and your mentor will help you with reviewing drafts.

Once the application is ready, the first stage in the submission process for PFHEA will be to upload the application to Moodle for pre-panel review three weeks before the formal submission deadline. The pre-panel will operate as a filter and provide applicants with time to make minor revisions following feedback.

The Guidance: An Overview

If evidence is far from meeting the Descriptor criteria, the pre-panel will explain where more evidence is required, and the application will not progress to formal submission. If the pre-panel judge that the application is likely to result in the award of PFHEA, the application will be included in the formal submission process. This step has been introduced to provide confidence that your application is not likely to be rejected by the full panel.

There will be a minimum of three reviewers on the final panel. All will be PFHEAs (though SFHEAs may be involved at the pre-panel stage) and one will be an external assessor. In the case that the three reviewers cannot agree, another external assessor views will be sought.

Section 1 will help you to make an informed decision as to whether to apply for Principal Fellowship.

Section 2 offers suggestions for ways of evidencing your knowledge and experience so you can prepare to make a successful application.

Section 3 guides you through the application process and explains the advocate statements so you can approach suitable colleagues in good time.

Section 1

What experience do I need to apply for Principal Fellowship?

Your application will detail a sustained record of effective strategic leadership in academic practice and academic development as a key contribution to high quality student learning. The emphasis is on leadership in teaching and supporting learning in higher education. The extent of your educational impact and sphere of influence must be significant.

What does this mean? An explanation follows.

Sustained - continuing for an extended period

Focus primarily, but not exclusively, on your activity during the past five years. You can include examples of interventions which are still having an impact although you initiated them more than five years ago if you can evidence their impact. The requirement for a 'sustained' record means that applications with one or two recent examples of strategic leadership without evidence of successful and sustained impact will not meet the criteria for Principal Fellowship. Significant results of leadership over a longer, extended period are required.

Effective strategic leadership - organising groups of people successfully to achieve a common goal in line with a policy

As a strategic leader, you may have helped to design and formulate policy. You need to outline approaches to facilitating the implementation of change with positive outcomes.

Consider a few examples of your sustained record of effective strategic leadership. Can you provide a few quotations, illustrations and/or metrics of the impact of your leadership to strengthen your application? If you do not have evidence of sustained and effective strategic leadership, you may need to delay your application until you've had the time to see your initiatives come to fruition.

A key contribution to student learning – initiatives which enable all students to achieve their best in UCL's diverse research-intensive environment as well as nationally and internationally

As a key contributor to the enhancement of student learning at UCL and beyond, you may have designed and disseminated innovative approaches to research-based education in challenging areas of your discipline, written about these, and/or presented your work at conferences on teaching in higher education. You will have developed your initiatives iteratively over a sustained period.

What 'key contributions' have you made to student learning? If you haven't had the opportunity to disseminate your initiatives, you may need more time to plan how to write about your work, present it to a wider audience and gather evidence of impact such as enhanced practice.

Subject research (unless it focuses on teaching, learning and assessment in your discipline) and management which does not relate to leadership in teaching and supporting learning are not relevant to this application.

If you think you can provide evidence of effective strategic leadership in teaching and supporting learning in higher education, please arrange for an appointment with a Principal Fellowship mentor, by emailing arena.open@ucl.ac.uk

Ahead of your first meeting with your mentor, please complete a draft of the 'Record of Educational Impact' in the Principal Fellowship 'Initial Guidance Template.'

This is available on the Arena Open Moodle in the Principal Fellowship tab: <https://moodle-1819.ucl.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=11885§ion=5>

Section 2

How do I show that I meet the Principal Fellow descriptors?

There are five descriptors:

D4.I. Active commitment to and championing of all Dimensions of the Framework, through work with students and staff, and in institutional developments

D4.II. Successful, strategic leadership to enhance student learning, with a particular, but not necessarily exclusive, focus on enhancing teaching quality in institutional, and/or (inter) national settings

D4.III. Establishing effective organisational policies and/or strategies for supporting and promoting others (e.g. through mentoring, coaching) in delivering high quality teaching and support for learning

D4.IV. Championing, within institutional and/or wider settings, an integrated approach to academic practice (incorporating, for example, teaching, learning, research, scholarship, administration etc.)

D4.V. A sustained and successful commitment to, and engagement in, continuing professional development related to academic, institutional and/or other professional practices.

Approaches to providing evidence that you meet each of these descriptors follow. Roles vary so you can draw on a wide range of work.

Your writing needs to be analytical rather than descriptive. Do not simply provide an account of what you have done. Provide a rationale for your choice of strategy and root that rationale in both your experience and literature on higher education. Weigh up and evaluate the impact of your choices and explain why you may have needed to adjust your approach to achieve the best possible outcomes. Acknowledge the contextual factors which shape your work.

D4.I. Active commitment to and championing of all Dimensions of the Framework, through work with students and staff, and in institutional developments

The 'Dimensions of the Framework' are the dimensions of the UKPSF (See p.3). https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/sites/default/files/downloads/UKPSF_2011_English.pdf

These Areas of Activity, the Core Knowledge, and Professional Values are the foundation of your application. Read them carefully before you start planning and writing your application. Consider your Professional Values as they need to be articulated and demonstrated in your evidence. It is helpful to mention the relevant Dimensions as they arise. For example, if you have initiated a nationwide project to enhance student learning from feedback, you might write: 'The aim of this initiative was to improve student learning from feedback (A3) across the sector.'

D4.I will be evidenced and referred to throughout your application. The dimensions overlap but make sure you refer to every dimension in the course of your application. Also mention the literature on higher education

D4.II. Successful, strategic leadership to enhance student learning, with a particular, but not necessarily exclusive, focus on enhancing teaching quality in institutional, and/or (inter)national settings

Evidence that you meet this descriptor will consist of accounts of your successful initiatives to improve teaching (including assessment) and/or learning support and the positive impact of your work on student learning. In UCL, these are likely to highlight the development of research-based education in a Connected Curriculum: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/teaching-learning/connected-curriculum-framework-research-based-education>

our role may involve the integration of inclusive teaching into the curriculum to ensure that diverse learner communities are fully enabled to achieve the best they can. You may also have led institutional, national or international research into learning in higher education.

If you have devised and managed projects in a team, ensure that your individual leadership role is clear. You can relate your account to institutional objectives or mission statements which you may have formulated. You can outline any obstacles and how you overcame these. Ensure that you make it clear that the impact of your leadership extends beyond UCL (nationally or internationally). Refer to the dimensions of the UKPSF (see D4.I above).

D4.III. Establishing effective organisational policies and/or strategies for supporting and promoting others (e.g. through mentoring, coaching) in delivering high quality teaching and support for learning

How have you influenced the policies of your institution so they support and promote staff in relation to the enhancement of teaching and learning support? You may have set up, evaluated and developed a mentoring scheme for postgraduate teaching assistants across UCL, or initiated small grants to enable teaching teams to devise research-based approaches to student learning.

How have you ensured that the efforts of your staff who develop high quality teaching are rewarded and recognised? Are providers of learning support given opportunities for professional development and recognition? Have you supported mentoring schemes for applicants for recognition as UCL Arena Fellows/Fellows of the HEA or systems for appraisal and promotion which reward staff for their engagement with teaching? You will need to provide evidence of the impact of any of these initiatives. Clarify your role and include references to the UKPSF dimensions (See Appendix 1) https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/sites/default/files/downloads/UKPSF_2011_English.pdf

D4.IV. Championing, within institutional and/or wider settings, an integrated approach to academic practice (incorporating, for example, teaching, learning, research, scholarship, administration etc.)

The best way of approaching this descriptor is to think of the many roles of the staff you lead and how they relate to each other. It is important to acknowledge the complexity of the higher education context. How do you work with that complexity?

Research-based education and enabling are good examples at UCL. You may, for example, have started strategic initiatives which promote student insights into research, such as 'Meet your Professor' interviews: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/teaching-learning/research-based-education/students-connect-researchers-and-institutions-research-dimension-one>

You may have led strategic work across disciplines, to transform curriculum, led large-scale projects in our 'Grand Challenges', or initiated transformational 'students as partners' initiatives. You may have had a significant impact on the higher education sector beyond the institution, for example through impact on the strategic direction of subject-related societies or professional bodies in relation to education. These are just examples, but they should give you a sense of the scope of activity needed for Principal Fellowship: successful practice within a single department will not meet the requirements for the award.

These activities may centre on specific central areas of disciplinary research, yet integrate many interwoven strands of activity which promote high quality student learning. You may have gathered groups of teachers to study the latest literature on learning and applied it to new approaches to helping students to learn in your discipline in order to integrate evidence-informed approaches and the outcomes of research into teaching.

As for the other descriptors, you should include here evidence of the impact of the projects you have led and be specific about your own individual leadership role.

D4.V. A sustained and successful commitment to, and engagement in, continuing professional development related to academic, institutional and/or other professional practices

Attainment of this descriptor is evidenced primarily in Section Two of your application (see the application template in the Principal Fellow section of UCL Arena Open Moodle). You are invited to outline your engagement in continuing professional development over an extended period of time. Please focus most strongly on the last five years. As you are aiming to provide a 'sustained and effective record of impact' you will probably draw on your contributions to and learning from work with external organisations or professional bodies. You could, for example, outline how you introduced a new approach to assessing professional learning in a work setting and supported an accrediting body in gaining acceptance for this innovation across the sector. Your contribution to this activity may have helped you to learn how to facilitate change in teaching in higher education on a large scale. It is important to detail both the activity and how it contributed to your continuing professional development. You may have contributed to the formulation of Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) benchmark statements in your subject and learnt about different approaches to learning in your discipline from colleagues in the group. This may have had an impact on the way you led the development of the teaching of your subject in UCL/your home university. You may then have promoted these new approaches nationally or internationally.

Section 3

Advocate Statements and the Application and Recognition Process

You need three advocates to support your application for Principal Fellowship. Please ensure that you provide your advocates with the 'Guidance for Advocates' which is available on the UCL Arena Open Moodle: <https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=26721>

Please also send your advocates the Advocate's Template which is also available on the Moodle.

The role of the advocate is to recommend you for recognition as a Principal Fellow. The HEA has determined the following minimum criteria for the selection of the set of advocates:

- One of the three advocates needs to be a Fellow, Senior Fellow, or Principal Fellow of the HEA
- One needs to be in a position to comment on how you have directly influenced their practice
- At least one advocate should be external to UCL, and at least one should be from within UCL

There is a section in the application template for the Advocate Statements. Please paste the statements into the Advocate Statement section before you submit your application.

Applications for UCL Arena Principal Fellowship entitling you to HEA Principal Fellowship can be made throughout the year. A list of deadlines is available here: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/teaching-learning/ucl-arena/arena-open>

Please ensure that you arrange a meeting with the Director of UCL Arena before you begin writing your application. It is also essential to discuss your developing application with the Director or a senior UCL Arena colleague.

Please mail arena.open@ucl.ac.uk to set up a meeting. Applications are completed using the Principal Fellow application template which will be mailed to you on request (mail address as above).

Your PFHEA mentor and additional trained assessor (a Senior or Principal Fellow) will form a pre-panel to provide you with feedback before submission. The pre-panel will advise you if your application is ready for submission. Please contact your mentor about the pre-panel.

Applications are made via the UCL Arena Open Moodle under the Principal Fellow tab: <https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=26721>

Recognition decisions are reached by a minimum of three experienced reviewers, one of whom is external to UCL and one of whom is normally a PFHEA (with a minimum requirement that there are two SFHEAs).

The Application Template

Instructions for the completion of each section of the template are provided within the template. An overview follows.

Section 1 – personal information

This section provides information about you and your role and academic and/or professional qualifications

Section 2 – Continuing professional development

This section is designed to enable you to evidence your attainment of Principal Fellow Descriptor 4.V. See p.4 above for examples of activities which you might include.

Section 3 – Record of Educational Impact

This is an overview of your sustained record of effective strategic leadership as a key contribution to high quality student learning. This section, in tabular form, enables you to map the impact you have made to the Descriptors 4.II – 4.IV.

Section 4 – Analytical Case Studies

These four case studies (around 800 to 1,000 words each) will draw on selected examples from the overview in Section 3, elaborating your approaches to the leadership of teaching and learning. The case studies will provide evidence of your successful leadership and impact in relation to all the dimensions of the UKPSF: https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/sites/default/files/downloads/UKPSF_2011_English.pdf

Section 4 (option 2) - Analytical case studies - with an oral multimedia presentation

If you would prefer to submit a presentation of your analytical case studies, with the option to include sound, images and video, you are most welcome to do so. Your presentation should last a maximum of 40 minutes. Please ask the member of the Arena team who is supporting you with your application for advice. You will need to ensure that your presentation demonstrates attainment of Descriptor 4.

The written sections of the application will be uploaded to the Principal Fellow submissions area on the Arena Open Moodle. There is also a submissions area for the oral/multimedia section.

Section 5 – Advocate Statements

Please paste your advocate statements into this section of the template.

Section 6 - Staying in Good Standing with your Professional Development: a Higher Education Academy Requirement

This is a signed undertaking that you will continue to develop your leadership of teaching and learning in higher education.

Appendix 1 - Principal Fellow Descriptor Overview



Descriptor 4: Principal Fellow Overview of the UKPSF

For highly experienced academics, able to provide evidence of a sustained and effective record of impact at a strategic level in relation to teaching and learning, as part of a wider commitment to academic practice. This may be within their institution or wider (inter)national settings.

Principal Fellow demonstrates a sustained record of effective strategic leadership in academic practice and academic development as a key contribution to high quality student learning. Individuals should be able to provide evidence of:

- 1) Active commitment to and championing of all Dimensions of the Framework, through work with students and staff, and in institutional developments
- 2) Successful, strategic leadership to enhance student learning, with a particular, but not necessarily exclusive, focus on enhancing teaching quality in institutional, and/or (inter)national settings
- 3) Establishing effective organisational policies and/or strategies for supporting and promoting others (e.g. through mentoring, coaching) in delivering high quality teaching and support for learning
- 4) Championing, within institutional and/or wider settings, an integrated approach to academic practice (incorporating, for example, teaching, learning, research, scholarship, administration etc.)
- 5) A sustained and successful commitment to, and engagement in, continuing professional development related to academic, institutional and/or other professional practices

Areas of Activity

- A1 Design and plan learning activities and/or programmes of study
- A2 Teach and/or support learning
- A3 Assess and give feedback to learners
- A4 Develop effective learning environments and approaches to student support and guidance
- A5 Engage in continuing professional development in subjects/disciplines and their pedagogy, incorporating research, scholarship and the evaluations of professional practice

Core Knowledge

- K1 The subject material
- K2 Appropriate methods for teaching and learning in the subject area and at the level of the academic programme
- K3 How students learn, both generally and within their subject/disciplinary area(s)
- K4 The use and value of appropriate learning technologies
- K5 Methods for evaluating the effectiveness of teaching
- K6 The implications of quality assurance and quality enhancement for academic and professional practice with a particular focus on teaching

Professional Values

- V1 Respect individual learners and diverse learning communities
- V2 Promote participation in higher education and equality of opportunities for learners
- V3 Use evidence-informed approaches and the outcomes from research, scholarship and continuing professional development
- V4 Acknowledge the wider context in which higher education operates recognising the implications for professional practice

