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Swansea Academy of Learning and Teaching  
Academi Dysgu ac Addysgu Abertawe

# Swansea University Supported Route to Associate Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy (AFHEA)

For part-time staff who are PGR students employed by Swansea University as Learning Demonstrators or Senior Teaching Assistants

**August 2023**

Route to Associate Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy (AFHEA) for part-time staff who are also PGR students employed to teach

## What is the Supported Route to Associate Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy (AFHEA) for Learning Demonstrators/Senior Teaching Assistants?

This route to Associate Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy (AFHEA) is for part-time staff who are postgraduate research (PGR) students employed by Swansea University's Human Resources Directorate to support student learning through specific teaching/learner support duties. This may include:

- PGR students undertaking direct learning support, e.g. demonstrating or conducting seminars;
- PGR students supporting field trips/laboratory work/student projects;
- PGR students supporting the assessment process under the supervision of a member of SU staff.

The programme is designed to scaffold your development as a teacher at the very start of your possible career in supporting learning in higher education and to provide a framework for your application for AFHEA through the Swansea accredited Swansea Application Route (SAR Route).

The AFHEA section of the programme should be completed within eight months. If later in your career you become a lecturer or take on another role that involves teaching in Higher Education, you might then be eligible to apply for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for the HEA accredited PGCert programme or make a claim for Fellowship of the Higher Education via the SAR Experienced Route. Specific options available to such individuals determined with reference to Swansea University's employment policies.

### Who is eligible?

If you are employed part-time by Swansea University as a Learning Demonstrator or Senior Teaching Assistant **AND** you are pursuing a Postgraduate Research programme you are eligible. There is a limited numbers of participants that SALT can support. **Your supervisor must agree for you to pursue the AFHEA support programme before your enrolment on the programme can be confirmed.**

Eligible participants would normally complete this support programme to submit an AFHEA application within eight months. There is no cost associated with the AFHEA programme or subsequent application via the SAR route.

Usually, you will still need to be employed by the University as a Learning Demonstrator or Senior Teaching Assistant at the time of the submission of your application for AFHEA and its subsequent decision. The final submission deadline for AFHEA applications via this route will be in April/May in the academic year in which you begin the programme. The specific deadline for the current academic year is provided on the AFHEA Canvas course. If you have completed your research programme and/or are no longer employed for teaching/support duties, the eligibility to submit and/or costs associated with an AFHEA application will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

### Who is ineligible?

Undergraduates or students pursuing a taught postgraduate programme are ineligible. PGR students supported externally via a stipend that requires a commitment to teach as part of their programme (commonly referred to as Graduate Teaching Assistants) are also ineligible through this internal route but are encouraged to apply direct to Advance HE.

## Why should I do this?

- You will be guided in your initial experiences in supporting student learning by a mentor from SALT's Recognition Team.
- It consolidates your personal development and emphasises expectations should you go on to continue in your professional practice in HE.
- Successful completion gives you the entitlement to use post-nominal letters – AFHEA.
- It is a valuable measure of success and will facilitate future employment in the higher education sector.
- Associate Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy is recognised and valued by a growing number of international institutions.

The programme lays the groundwork for a future application for Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy (FHEA) or certain exemptions from a Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education (requirements will vary between institutions).

## How does it work?

First, have an initial conversation with your supervisor to review your progress on your studies and the time commitment involved. **Your supervisor must support your request to participate in order to gain access to this programme and place this approval on the University's PGR progression reporting system (e:Vision).**

The programme involves a combination of support from your mentor (at least four group or individual meetings), practical application of what you have learnt in your teaching, peer observation and guidance in producing an application for Associate Fellowship.

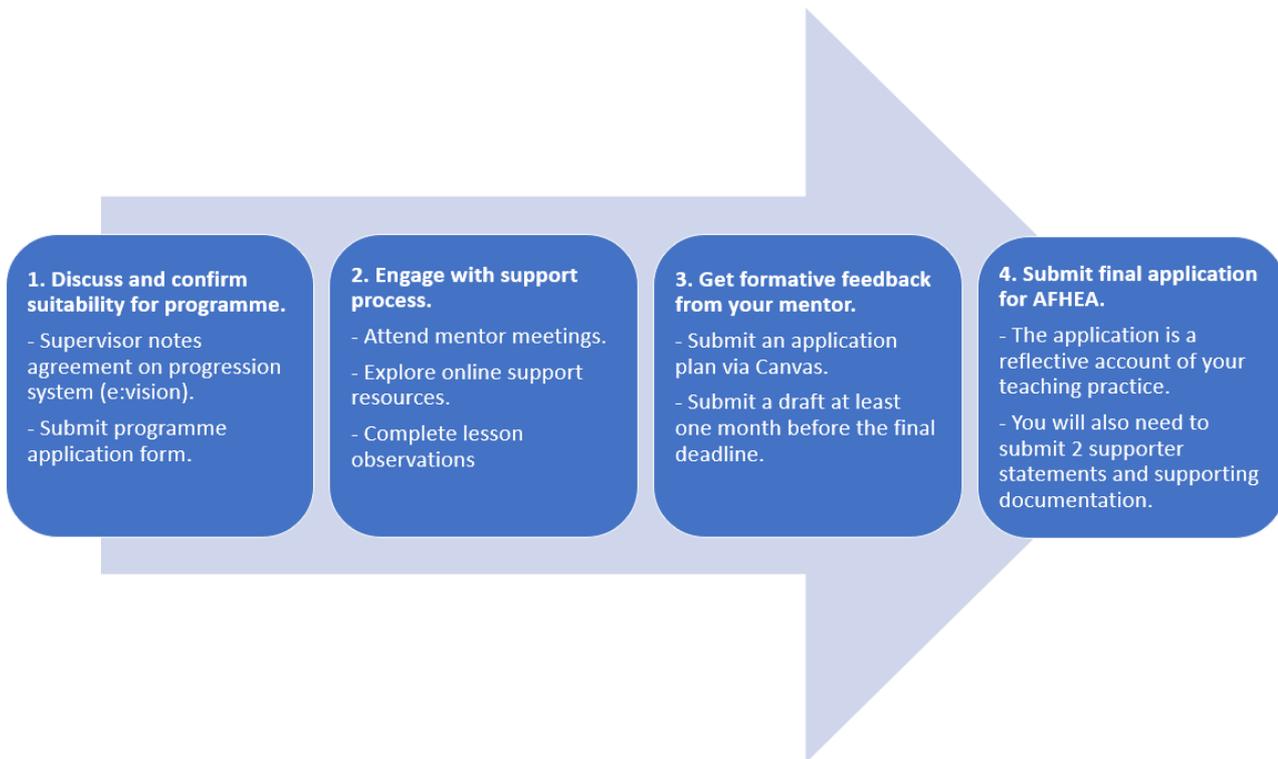
You will be allocated a mentor to guide you through the programme. At an initial meeting with your mentor, they will go through the programme with you in more detail, discuss your previous experience and help you to plan how and when you will complete the programme of support. These meetings may be held individually or in a group.

## What will I have to do?

1. Get agreement from your research degree supervisor to engage in the programme.
2. Meet with your mentor to guide you in the initial discussions about AFHEA recognition. This should include a review of your experience to date, future plans, and relevant material required for an AFHEA application.
3. Access the online materials on Canvas and work through the relevant sections below:
  - a. Getting Started: Programme Induction
  - b. Mandatory Programme Elements
  - c. Areas of Activity:
    - Design and planning
    - Teaching and learning
    - Assessment and feedback
    - Effective learning environments and student support
  - d. The Assessment Process and Beyond
4. Submit a plan, lesson observation forms, and a draft of your AFHEA application for feedback from your mentor prior to the final submission deadline.

Once these elements are complete, you will be able to submit a final application for AFHEA by completing the relevant sections of the Swansea Application Route form and submitting that for internal scrutiny.

In total, you will engage with your mentor on four occasions (one will include reviewing formative feedback on your draft AFHEA application.)



**Four support interactions with Faculty/School-based mentor** (individually or as a group) during the application process to include: initial discussion about teaching experience, arranging peer observations and choosing a suitable person to observe, supporting reflection, review of draft.

## What are the online resources?

You will be enrolled on the **Supported Route to Associate Fellowship of the HEA** module on Canvas, where you will find all the materials and information for the programme.

The online resources are in sections/modules as detailed below. They contain a mixture of readings, videos and reflective activities all designed to support you in the early stages of your teaching career and provide the background for your AFHEA application.

### Canvas Module A: Getting Started - Programme Induction

In this module you will find some essential course information such as a course overview, a list of submission deadlines and mandatory course elements, as well as an outline of the ways in which your mentor will be able to support you as your progress through the programme.

This section will also explore the UKPSF: what it is, why it is important and how getting to know it well will help the development of your career. You will need to understand the UKPSF and its application to teaching in order to complete your AFHEA application.

The UKPSF is “a comprehensive set of professional standards and guidelines for everyone involved in teaching and supporting learning in HE, it can be applied to personal development programmes at individual or institutional level to improve teaching quality”.

The framework identifies the diverse range of teaching and support roles and environments. These are reflected and are expressed in the Dimensions of Professional Practice. The UKPSF clearly outlines the Dimensions of Professional Practice with HE teaching and learning support as:

- Areas of Activity undertaken by teachers and support staff
- Core Knowledge needed to carry out those activities at the appropriate level
- Professional Values that individuals performing these activities should exemplify.

<https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/dimensions-framework>

As the application will require you to reflect on your teaching experiences, you will also find guidance on becoming a reflective educator and writing reflectively in this section.

### Canvas Module B: Mandatory Programme Elements

There are several mandatory aspects of this programme. In this section you will find guidance and documentation relating to the completion of peer observations, supporter statements and your application plan. You will also find further information on the two routes to associate fellowship: written and presentation. Once you have selected which route you would like to pursue, the application material can be downloaded from this module.

### Canvas Module C: Design and Planning

This section will be useful to those who have responsibility for planning and designing some of the learning materials and activities that they deliver. It aims to raise awareness of effective approaches to planning learning experiences and aligning these activities with your intended outcomes.

### Canvas Module D: Teaching and Learning

This section is designed to help you plan, stage and present your input in a way that will help you achieve your aims and deliver your content in an accessible and engaging way. It aims to raise awareness of

various approaches, which should make teaching and support easier, less stressful, and more effective. We strongly encourage applicants to reflect on this area of activity in their fellowship application.

### Canvas Module E: Assessment and Feedback

The section will examine the theory and practice of assessment and feedback. It will give you the opportunity to consider the purposes of assessment and to explore and identify a range of assessment processes. By reflecting on your practice as you work through the material, you will be able to consider how to trial new assessment approaches, such as improving the quality of your written feedback or enhancing assignments with technology.

### Canvas Module F: Effective Learning Environments and Student Support

This section will explore how to create effective learning environments for both online teaching and the different settings used for in-person teaching. You will explore approaches to setting up, organising and managing these environments to maximise the benefits for student learning, and will reflect on the range of approaches that you have taken to providing support and guidance to your students.

## What happens in the observations?

From Swansea University Peer Observation of Teaching Policy:

“Peer observation of teaching is an enabling process, for staff with teaching responsibilities to reflect on and improve their teaching practice. This policy therefore should be used by all teaching staff as they work together to increase the effectiveness of their teaching through observation, discussion and reflection. This process has the potential for sharing best practice across disciplines thus improving the quality of the student learning experience. It can also be a catalyst for creating communities of practice.”

There are two parts of the observations:

#### 1. You are the observer

For this part you are invited to observe and reflect on a lesson delivered by a member of staff, usually from the same School. The focus when observing others for this activity is on what you can learn from the teacher you are observing.

#### 2. You are being observed

As part of the programme, you will need to be observed twice. Peer observation here at Swansea is undertaken for the purpose of enhancing teaching practice and improving student learning, with control of the observation process belonging to the individual staff member being observed.

The observer must be an experienced member of staff currently employed at Swansea University. They should also hold HEA fellowship, senior fellowship, or principal fellowship. The *public* list of staff holding fellowship is available on this staff intranet page (you will need to log in with your staff account to access the page): [HEA Fellows at Swansea - Swansea University](#)

Please note that there are more staff with fellowship than there are listed. Your mentor will support you through this process and there are materials available to support you in the Canvas course.

## Support

As outlined above, you will be supported with the development of your application by a mentor. Their role will be to guide you in completing the relevant activities to provide sufficient evidence to support an AFHEA application. Your mentor may meet with you individually or as a group, and may provide additional supplemental resources to guide you, e.g. on reflective writing.

Mentors will review a draft of your AFHEA application prior to submission and provide formative feedback. You must submit a draft application to the deadline six weeks prior to the final application deadline. If you fail to submit a draft, **you will not be permitted to make a final submission**. Your mentor may also support you initially to complete your application plan to review your experience.

Once you have completed all aspects of the AFHEA programme, you will be able to submit the final version of your application within the AFHEA Canvas course.

## What is the assessment?

The assessment for the AFHEA section of the programme is to complete an application for Associate Fellowship via the Swansea Application Route (SAR). You can choose whether your application is a written application or a presentation. As part of your application, you will need to provide two supporting statements to authenticate your practice. Your mentor will discuss the detail of this with you.

### Supporting statements

You need to include two supporting statements with your application for Associate Fellowship. Supporters need to be knowledgeable about the UKPSF and your teaching experience. At least one of your supporters must hold HEA Fellowship (of any category), and at least one must be an experienced member of staff employed by Swansea University at the time of your submission. Staff who have retired from higher education within the last six months are eligible to be supporters, but fellow PGR students are not. You must ensure that your supporters have no conflicts of interest, for example, supporting statements from family members are not permitted.

With the help of your mentor, you will need to identify two members of staff to write your supporting statements and provide them with the appropriate template from the Canvas course. You will then need to upload these supporting statements along with your final application.

You should provide your supporters with at least a draft of your application to review, since they will be asked to comment on specific examples that you have included in your application. You are advised to approach potential supporters early to ensure that you will have their statements ready to upload with your final application.

### How will I be assessed?

Two assessors will review your application. Each assessor reviews the key reflective part of the application and considers how well the applicant has:

- a) Demonstrated alignment with the Associate Fellowship category descriptor;
- b) Provided sufficient and relevant evidence of effective practice and substantiated supporting statements;
- c) Provided a sufficiently reflective account indicating lessons learnt;
- d) Demonstrated a level of knowledge of the relevant pedagogic/practice literature supporting learning, teaching and assessment commensurate with Associate Fellowship;

- e) Been able to provide sufficient evidence with explicit reference to the UKPSF.

Written submissions are assessed on the narrative and documentation submitted as part of the written route application requirements; presentation submissions are assessed on the documentation submitted in conjunction with their delivered presentation.

Assessors will scrutinise applications in accordance with alignment to the **HEA Assessment Rubric**, which contains the Associate Fellowship category descriptor. The kinds of activities that may demonstrate meeting the dimensions of the UKPSF may be found in the HEA Dimensions of Practice Guidance on how the UKPSF applies.

## Feedback

Feedback will be provided to all applicants as quickly as possible following review of their application, and ratification by the SAR Panel.

Feedback should include areas of strengths, and areas for enhancement, and future targets, where appropriate. The assessors should be satisfied that the applicant has demonstrated alignment to the UKPSF in relation to the relevant descriptor.

## What happens next?

After completion of your research degree, if you become a member of teaching staff at Swansea University and wish to continue to FHEA, you may be advised by your line manager to undertake the PGCert or make use of the support and materials provided as part of the SAR Experienced Route to Fellowship.

## Programme Team

Name	Contact Details	Role
Chris Hall	<a href="mailto:c.m.hall@swansea.ac.uk">c.m.hall@swansea.ac.uk</a> Room 314, SALT, CDS Building	Programme Director
Carys Howells	<a href="mailto:c.howells@swansea.ac.uk">c.howells@swansea.ac.uk</a>	Academic Developers
Darren Minister	<a href="mailto:d.g.minister@swansea.ac.uk">d.g.minister@swansea.ac.uk</a>	
Pamela Styles	<a href="mailto:pamela.styles@swansea.ac.uk">pamela.styles@swansea.ac.uk</a>	
Teresa Phipps	<a href="mailto:teresa.phipps@swansea.ac.uk">teresa.phipps@swansea.ac.uk</a>	PGR Senior Officer (Skills, Development and Training), Academic Services

## Requests for Extensions

If you feel you will not be able to meet your submission deadline, please contact your mentor as soon as possible. It is expected that you complete the programme of activities and submit an application for AFHEA within six months of starting this AFHEA programme and you are expected to be employed by the University as a Learning Demonstrator/Senior Teaching Assistant at the time of submission.

## Academic Standards and Academic Integrity

Applicants to both written and presentation routes must be aware that they should sustain academic standards and integrity in their writing/presentation.

On submission, applicants are asked to confirm that their application reflects their own work and that supporting statements have been uploaded unaltered.

Applications may be submitted through relevant plagiarism software and any instances of plagiarism will result in the application being, at minimum, rejected and, if plagiarism is detected after the Associate Fellowship decision has been granted, may result in that decision being revoked. The university's procedure regarding [Conduct and Discipline](#) will be applied.

**All applicants are asked for permission to use extracts or samples from submissions/presentations to promote the route subsequently.**

## Complaints

There is no limit to the amount of submissions that can be made for Associate Fellowship, therefore, there is no appeal on the grounds of judgement. You can appeal on procedural matters. Please consult the Appeals process.

If you are dissatisfied with the support received, you may complain by following the ISS Complaints procedure: [http://www.swansea.ac.uk/media/ISS%20Complaints%20Procedure%20v.%201.0\\_SJ.pdf](http://www.swansea.ac.uk/media/ISS%20Complaints%20Procedure%20v.%201.0_SJ.pdf)