

Consultation with Australasian Stakeholders on widening eligibility for HEA Fellowship

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Introduction

In February 2018 **Advance HE** (previously known as the **Higher Education Academy**) published a new policy statement which widened the eligibility for HEA Fellowship for applicants from the UK. The document was written by Karen Hustler – HEA Associate Head Academic & Professional Development (Accreditation & Fellowship) following a consultation with UK institutions and accreditors. The examples were all relating to UK context and provision and the document did not explicitly refer to application for applicants beyond the UK. A copy of the UK focused policy can be found here:

<https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/download/eligibility-hea-fellowship-february-2018>

This paper aims to set out the **boundaries of eligibility for HEA Fellowship**, and extend the examples approved for the UK context in February 2018 to provide further application to international fellowship applicants.

Institutional representatives in Australasia discussed the policy at the Australasian Accredited Program Manager Network Event in Brisbane in June 2018 and were consulted (along with wider stakeholders) in August 2018 and invited to comment and extend a draft document. This document incorporates feedback and suggestions from respondents from a range of institutions in Australia and New Zealand.

Background

The **Professional Standards Framework** (UKPSF, 2011) forms the basis for the award of four categories of HEA Fellowship. Individuals that teach and/or support learning in Higher Education are eligible to apply to become an HEA Fellow. The PSF acknowledges the variety and quality of teaching, learning and assessment practices that support and underpin HE student learning in diverse academic and/or professional settings (UKPSF, 2011; p2).

Advance HE recognises that Higher Education (HE) operates in diverse and complex global contexts which are subject to change. Many Higher Education Providers (HEPs) are adapting to offer greater flexibility and work-based learning opportunities. In defining eligibility for HEA Fellowship, the AHE wishes to be inclusive to all practitioners that teach and support HE learning in a wide range of situations/institutions globally, but also seeks to safeguard and maintain the credibility and value of HEA Fellowships in recognising professional HE practice.

Eligibility for HEA Fellowship

To be eligible to apply for HEA Fellowship, individuals must evidence their teaching and learning practice in Higher Education (HE) which is currently defined as:

- level 4 or above within the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) England and Wales;
- level 7 or above within the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF);
- 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 (AQF);
- level 5 or above of the New Zealand Qualification Framework (NZQF);
- 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 learning support staff may also be considered as evidence equivalent to the higher education academic frameworks.

In defining what constitutes HE teaching and learning within different international contexts, in order to determine eligibility for HEA Fellowship, AHE uses [UK NARIC](#) (National Recognition Information Centre) information about international education frameworks and qualifications. Programmes will be defined as HE for the purposes of staff teaching and supporting learning on the programme being eligible for HEA Fellowship if they are an integral part of a programme defined as Higher Education within the context of the country of study and are subject to the institution's HE validation or course approval/ progression/award rules and regulations.

However, for some staff teaching and supporting learning, defining the level at which they practice can be problematic as national academic qualification frameworks generally define the **level of a full HE qualification**, such as an undergraduate degree. Staff supporting learners where the programme 'level' is not clearly defined by the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (QAA, 2014), the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF 2013) or the New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQA 2010) might include those working on **Foundation Year Programs, Pre-Sessional English Courses, and Continuing Professional Development Courses**.

The tables overleaf includes the **agreed amendments** to eligibility from a UK perspective (column one) and **proposes similar amendments** to cover provision in Australia and New Zealand. In addition to the original three extension areas proposed by the UK consultation, the Australasian submission calls for further consideration of eligibility for staff supporting learners via **Work Integrated Learning** and **micro-credential** programs and initiatives.

Widening Eligibility for Fellowships for staff teaching on non-credit bearing Foundation or Enabling Programs

UK (Policy as at Feb 2018)

Students engaging on an HE programme of study will normally enter into a recognised HE 'contract/agreement' with the institution. For example, in the UK students take out a four-year loan for their studies on a **Foundation Year programme** (rather than a loan for a single year of study), which clearly indicates that the **Foundation Year of study forms part of an integrated degree programme with the usual progression entitlement/requirements between years**. Foundation year students can choose to transfer to another HEP at the end of the Foundation Year but this forms a normal part of credit transfer arrangements, possible between other years of study on degree programmes.

Australia (Proposed)

Foundation programs for international students are nationally recognised courses that equip students with the skills for **entry into the first year of Australian undergraduate HE programs**. In Australia the standards for Foundation Programs have been endorsed by State and Territory Governments as providing a uniform set of standards to be applied by designated authorities in approving non-award Foundation Programs to be placed on the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS).

Some Australian Universities that operate in an international context offer Foundation Programs offshore. These programs may not meet the Australian standards (which only apply to onshore programs), but they will meet the relevant standard for the offshore country.

In Australia the term 'Enabling Programs' is used by many institutions to encompass programs designed to address disadvantage and support participation and completion rates for students from key equity groups. The official definition of an enabling program, as provided in the Higher Education Support Act (2003), is:

"a course of instruction provided to a person for the purpose of enabling the person to undertake a course leading to a higher education award"

(Department of the Attorney General, 2003, p. 215).

Staff teaching in enabling programs with a HE context would be eligible to use their practice as evidence to support a claim for fellowship.

Eligible Examples:

Curtin University offers offshore foundation programs in Dubai, Mauritius, Singapore and Malaysia and students who successfully complete them are eligible to enter Curtin bachelor programs in Australia. Staff who teach into these programs would be able to draw on their practice as part of a recognition application [note if the applicant was not employed by the subscribing institution an additional Fellowship Fee (50% direct fee) would apply].

New Zealand (Proposed)

Foundation programmes are designed to prepare students for University education and develop skills in critical and independent thinking and subject knowledge. After completing the programme students **normally gain guaranteed entry into an aligned undergraduate degree program**

Summary Recommendations

R1. Staff working at Australian or New Zealand Higher Education institutions may use their experiences supporting learners on **Foundation or Enabling Programs** as evidence to support a claim for fellowship, including where the program is offered off shore

Widening Eligibility for Fellowships for staff teaching on non-credit bearing Pre- sessional English Programs

UK (Policy as at Feb 2018)

Pre-Sessional English Course for International Students

International students studying pre-sessional language courses *immediately prior* to enrolling onto HE programmes can also be classed as engaging in an integrated HE programme if they have already met the minimum language requirements and are completing a pre-sessional language programme that is designed to improve language skills within the context of developing academic study skills to prepare them for HE level study at the international HEP. For example, in the UK these students will have received a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) letter.

Australia (Proposed)

English for Academic Purposes Programs (EAP)

In Australia, the standards for ELICOS Programs provide a basis on which regulatory authorities may register a provider on the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS), under the ESOS Act, to deliver an ELICOS course. International students normally complete these programs immediately prior (and often as a condition of) entering onto a HE program (in Australia normally a Diploma (AQF5), a bachelor degree (AQF7) or a Graduate Certificate (AQF8).

Some Australian Universities that operate in an international context offer English for Academic Purposes Programs offshore. These programs may not meet the Australian standards (which only apply to onshore programs), but they will meet the relevant standard for the offshore country and are designed to achieve the same outcomes [note if the applicant was not employed by the subscribing institution an additional Fellowship Fee (50% direct fee) would apply]

Eligible Examples:

1. QUT International College the teaching in relation to EAP programs occurs within a higher education context and are understood as support for student learning despite occurring prior to their degree level study.
2. Curtin University offering an offshore English for Academic Purposes Program to students in China who complete it immediately prior (and often as a condition of) entry into a HE program
3. Staff working in a private Australian Technical and Further Education College (TAFE) teaching exclusively in English for Academic Purposes Program 1 or 2 (Students not concurrently enrolled on an AQF5 program but on completion intend to move onto a Foundation Program, Diploma Program (AQF5), or a Bachelor Degree (AQF7)

Ineligible Examples:

1. Staff member working on General English Programs (for students who plan to move onto English for Academic Purposes Programs)
2. Staff member working on International English Language Testing System (IELTS) assessments for students who might plan to move onto EAP, Foundation Programs or direct into HE study.

New Zealand (Proposed)

English for Academic Purposes Programs (EAP)

International students normally complete these programs immediately prior (and often as a condition of) entering onto a HE program (in New Zealand normally a Diploma (NZQF5), a bachelor degree (AQF7) or a Graduate Certificate (AQF8)).

EAP has a strong academic focus with the aim of preparing students for programmes at English-speaking tertiary institutions

Summary Recommendations

- R2. Staff working at Australian or New Zealand Higher Education institutions may use their experiences supporting learners on **English for Academic Purposes Programs** as evidence to support a claim for fellowship, including where the program is offered off shore

Widening Eligibility for Fellowships for staff teaching on non-credit bearing **Continuing Professional Development** programs

UK (Policy as at Feb 2018)

Staff delivering professional development programmes (credit or non-credit bearing) designed to update/extend knowledge and understanding for professionals operating at graduate/postgraduate level can also be included in eligibility for HEA Fellowship.

Eligible Examples:

Staff delivering professional development programmes provided for graduate medical practitioners (e.g. doctors) that relate to professional body requirements ('fitness to practice') may evidence their teaching and learning practice on these programmes.

Australia (proposed)

Staff delivering CPD (credit or non-credit bearing) designed to update and extend knowledge and understanding for professionals operating at graduate or postgraduate levels in the workplace.

Eligible Examples:

1. Staff leading CPD programs aimed as middle managers. Not a credit bearing curriculum but explicitly aimed at extending graduate skills.
2. Staff leading a short course of CPD for school Principals building on their graduate skills.
3. Staff leading a guest workshop for her professional body with a largely graduate membership e.g. Chartered Management Institute, Chartered Engineers, Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD).

Ineligible Examples:

Staff working as a consultant for a private body e.g. AICD and delivering CPD to graduates but not using curriculum developed within a HE context – for example using AICD curriculum

New Zealand (Proposed)

Staff delivering CPD (credit or non credit bearing) designed to update and extend knowledge and understanding for professionals operating at graduate or postgraduate levels in the workplace.

Eligible Examples:

1. Staff working in partnership with communities using a structured framework e.g. professional development with hapu or iwi.
2. Staff hosting a wānanga for professionals across a range of sectors.
3. Staff facilitating a curriculum design workshop for staff from local industries who are contracted to teach in the tertiary sector on an hourly-paid basis.
4. Staff providing professional development for high school teachers so they are better able to support underrepresented groups to enter tertiary education e.g. women in STEM subjects.
5. Staff leading a guest workshop for a professional body with a largely graduate membership e.g. Public Relations Institute of New Zealand (PRINZ).

Summary Recommendations

- R3. Staff working at Australian or New Zealand Higher Education institutions may use their experiences supporting learners on **Continuing Professional Development Programs** (CPD) as evidence to support a claim for fellowship, where the CPD is designed to update and extend knowledge for professionals operating in graduate roles;
- R4. Staff working at Australian or New Zealand Higher Education institutions may use their experiences working in partnership with communities as evidence to support a claim for fellowship, where the development uses structured frameworks informed by a scholarly evidence-base

Widening Eligibility for Fellowships for staff teaching students within a work/industry context

This was not discussed within the original UK policy update and although implicit within Fellowship Guidance, it needs to be made explicit to clarify the scope for staff working outside of the UK.

Australia and New Zealand (Proposed)

Staff supporting HE students on placements, internships, or Work Integrated Learning activities within an industry or professional setting.

Eligible Examples:

Industry based staff members supporting University students' learning through work-based placements e.g. Social Care, Nursing, Schools, [note if the applicant was not employed by the subscribing institution an additional Fellowship Fee (50% direct fee) would apply]

Summary Recommendations

R5. Industry or Profession based applicants from Australia and New Zealand may use their experiences supporting Higher Education students on **placements, internships or in Work-Integrated-Learning activities** as evidence to support a claim for fellowship [note if the applicant is not employed by the subscribing institution an additional Fellowship Fee will apply]

Conclusion and Recommendations

Eligibility for HEA Fellowship has recently been widened to include eligibility for three groups of practitioners that teach and support learning in the UK. This paper widens UK focused policy to incorporate specific examples relevant to staff working in Australia and New Zealand. It is proposed that this widening of eligibility encompasses Australian and New Zealand.

In addition to the changes outlined in this document there is an additional area that we propose AHE to consider. Australia and New Zealand are actively pursuing national **micro-credential systems**. In New Zealand the Qualification Authority (NZQA) Rules to consider applications for approval of micro-credentials came into effect in August 2018. In Australia, a number of Universities are already offering micro-credentialling, benchmarked to the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) and changes to the AQF are being considered with a view to incorporate micro-credentials from 2019. It is anticipated that there will be international growth in micro-credentialling over the next year and explicit reference to eligibility for recognition will be a key step in supporting staff who teach and assess in this space.

In all fellowship applications there is a need for the applicant to demonstrate their practice and alignment with the relevant descriptor of the Professional Standards Framework. Widening eligibility does not change the requirement for applicants to contextualise and provide evidence to support their claim for recognition. However, the changes outlined above will mean that the revised AHE policy is applied equitably by ensuring that the new rules make sense and apply to applicants working in Higher Education contexts in Australia and New Zealand.

Summary Recommendations

- R1. Staff working at Australian or New Zealand Higher Education institutions may use their experiences supporting learners on **Foundation or Enabling Programs** as evidence to support a claim for fellowship, including where the program is offered off shore
- R2. Staff working at Australian or New Zealand Higher Education institutions may use their experiences supporting learners on **English for Academic Purposes Programs** as evidence to support a claim for fellowship, including where the program is off shore
- R3. Staff working at Australian or New Zealand Higher Education institutions may use their experiences supporting learners on **Continuing Professional Development Programs** (CPD) as evidence to support a claim for fellowship, where the CPD is designed to update and extend knowledge for professionals operating in graduate roles;
- R4. Staff working at Australian or New Zealand Higher Education institutions may use their experiences working in partnership with communities as evidence to support a claim for fellowship, where the development uses structured frameworks informed by a scholarly evidence-base
- R5. Industry or Profession based applicants from Australia and New Zealand may use their experiences supporting Higher Education students on **placements, internships or in Work-Integrated-Learning activities** as evidence to support a claim for fellowship [if the applicant is not employed by the subscribing institution an additional fee will apply]
- R6. AHE undertake wider consultation with the sector to determine the appetite for incorporating evidence from micro-credential systems and programs as evidence to support a claim for recognition.

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