



# STAR Framework

Handbook



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**Please note:**

**This *STAR Framework Participant Handbook* should be read in conjunction with the following documents:**

- THE PSF 2023
- The *STAR Framework Application Guide*
- The *STAR Framework Application Templates*
- The *Advance HE Guides to the PSF 2023 Dimensions*

These documents are included in the Application Packs specific to each category of fellowship, which you can download from the STAR Framework website at:

<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/staff/star-framework/forms/>

## Introduction

### Welcome to the STAR Framework - your path to professional recognition for teaching

If you have a role in teaching or supporting learning at Imperial, the STAR Framework will enable you to have this experience formally recognised by Advance HE. The Framework is accredited by Advance HE and offers recognition via different types of fellowships. This professional recognition is accepted across Higher Education in the UK and is increasingly acknowledged by international institutions.

Participation in STAR is voluntary and is free to all those who teach and support College students. The eligibility requirements are that you hold an Imperial College contract and have an active College ICT account (including an Imperial College e-mail address) at the time of application. The STAR Framework is open to academic staff, clinical teachers, support staff, graduate teaching assistants, and any other member of staff involved in teaching and/or supporting learning at Imperial. The Framework offers a flexible approach that allows you to count all your relevant experience and training towards your fellowship application. This handbook outlines the levels of fellowship, explains the procedure for applying and gaining fellowship, and how College provides support for you in the process.

#### What does professional recognition mean?

Imperial College provides a range of professional development opportunities for those staff with a role in teaching and learning. This provision is offered both centrally (through units including the EDU, LDC and Graduate School) and at Faculty level. Advance HE is the national body for learning and teaching in higher education. Advance HE have accredited Imperial's STAR Framework, enabling staff who participate in either the taught or flexible STAR pathways to gain professional recognition via the award of fellowship.

Depending on your level of experience, you can apply to become an Associate Fellow, Fellow, Senior Fellow or Principal Fellow.

Benefits to gaining recognition as a fellow:

- It provides national (and international) recognition of your commitment to professionalism in teaching and learning in higher education;
- It demonstrates that your practice is aligned with sector expectations and standards (PSF 2023);
- It is a portable asset that has UK-wide and international relevance, and which is increasingly recognised (and often required) by higher and further education institutions. Your fellowship is attached to you, and not to any particular institution.

#### How do I find out more?

Talk to colleagues who are involved in teaching and learning and have a look at the information on the STAR Framework website ([www.imperial.ac.uk/staff/star-framework/](http://www.imperial.ac.uk/staff/star-framework/))

The EDU organise STAR Introductory Workshops which run several times a year, to:

- Introduce participants to the Professional Standards Framework (PSF 2023)

- Outline recognition requirements
- Help applicants identify the level of fellowship that best aligns to their teaching and learning practice
- Identify areas for continued professional development and suggest opportunities to address these
- Explore how to complete fellowship applications in an appropriately reflective and scholarly style

We strongly advise that all those interested in participating in the STAR Framework attend the 'STAR Introductory Workshop' as this provides a solid base from which to begin your application.

If you want to attend one of the workshops, you can find more and sign up here:

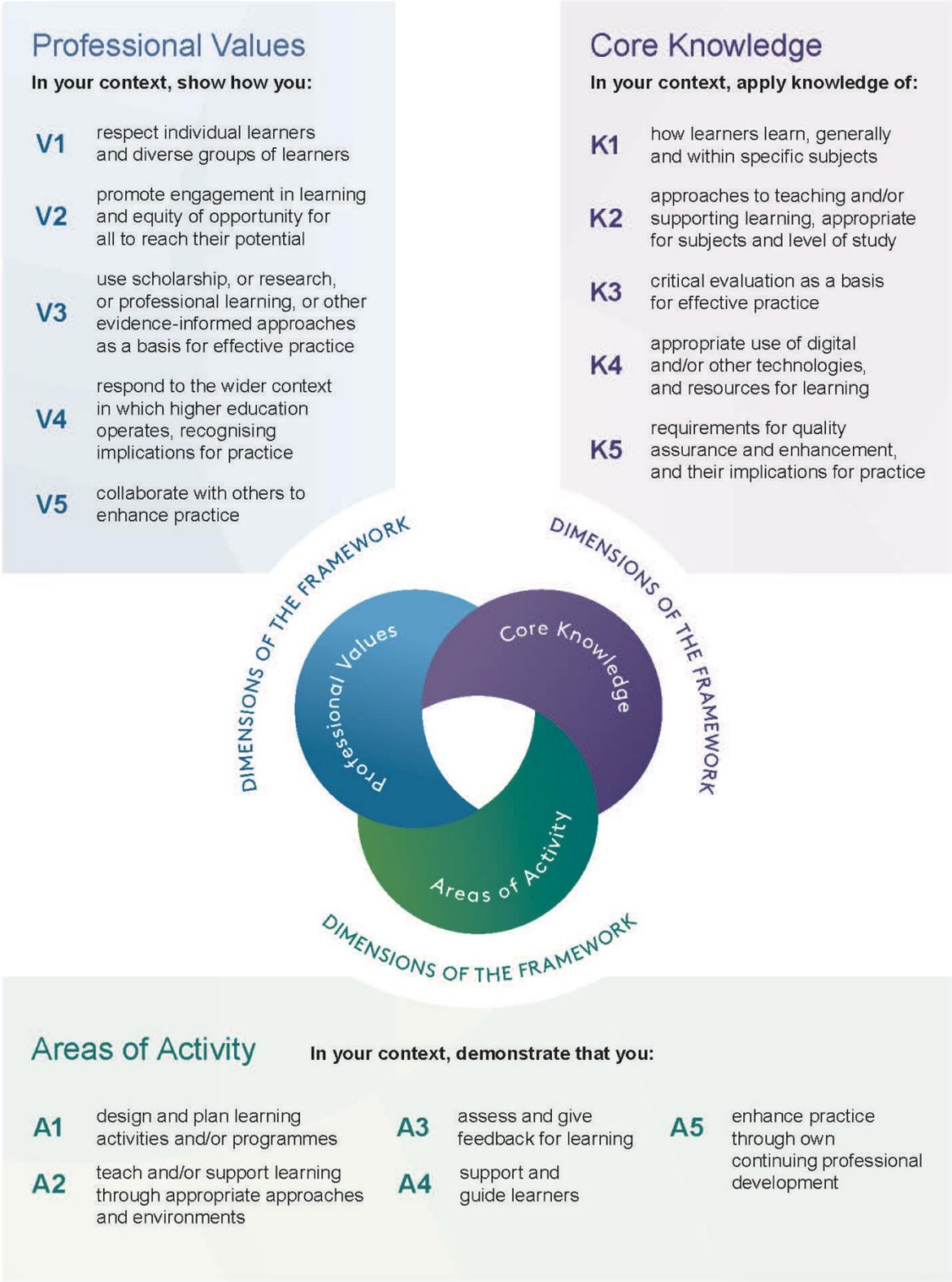
[www.imperial.ac.uk/staff/educational-development/workshops/star-framework/introductory-workshop/](http://www.imperial.ac.uk/staff/educational-development/workshops/star-framework/introductory-workshop/)

## The Professional Standards Framework (PSF 2023)

The PSF attempts to define the expectations and standards for effective and inclusive learning and teaching across the Higher Education sector. It provides a general description of the main dimensions of the roles of teaching and learning within the HE environment. It is written from the perspective of the practitioner and outlines a national framework for comprehensively recognising and benchmarking learning and teaching within higher education.

The PSF separates out the components of learning support and teaching roles into three groups of *Dimensions* of practice, and four *Descriptors* (categories of fellowship). The Dimensions try to capture common areas of teaching practice in HE and relate these to the knowledge-base and professional values that support them. The four Descriptors relate this to levels of experience or forms of engagement with teaching. They are not necessarily linked to seniority or particular job roles, but are associated with the specific nature and context of your professional education-related experience and practice.

# Dimensions of the Professional Standards Framework (PSF 2023)



## Which fellowship is the right one for me?

There are four different Descriptors or categories of fellowship. These Descriptors relate to your experience and practice in teaching and/or supporting learning. To help you to start thinking about the differences between the different Descriptors, those relatively new to teaching or with limited teaching role may be working towards Descriptor 1 (D1, which relates to Associate Fellowship – AFHEA). Those with more broadly-based educational experience and more substantive teaching practice would be interacting with the same Dimensions of practice shown on page 6, but may be working towards Descriptor 2 (D2 which is linked to Fellowship – FHEA). Those who are also engaged in a significant amount of practice involving educational leadership might be aligned with Descriptor 3 (D3, which is linked to Senior Fellowship – SFHEA). So, these Descriptors relate to different professional contexts, circumstances and forms of practice. The brief descriptions below may help you decide which Descriptor level you want to work towards.

### **D1 Associate Fellow (AFHEA)**

Associate Fellowship is often most appropriate for support staff, staff who are new to teaching, or staff who support teaching and learning as a relatively minor part of their practice. AFHEA is aligned to Descriptor 1 of the PSF and applications have to demonstrate effective and inclusive practice in at least two of the five Areas of Activity, the use of appropriate Professional Values (including at least V1 and V3) and the application of appropriate Core Knowledge (including at least K1, K2 and K3).

### **D2 Fellow (FHEA)**

Fellows are typically engaged in a wide range of teaching activities and have engaged in continuing professional development to support a reflective approach to teaching. FHEA is aligned to Descriptor 2 of the PSF, and applications have to demonstrate effective and inclusive practice in all five Areas of Activity, use of all five Professional Values, and application of all five forms of Core Knowledge.

### **D3 Senior Fellow (SFHEA)**

Senior Fellowship is aligned to D3 of the PSF. It is appropriate for those who can evidence effective and inclusive practice that integrates all Dimensions, and whose comprehensive understanding and effective practice provides a basis from which they lead or influence those who teach and/or support high-quality learning. It is designed to recognise the achievements of staff who have an influence on professional practice that extends significantly beyond their own teaching.

### **D4 Principal Fellow (PFHEA)**

Principal Fellowship is appropriate for highly experienced individuals whose practice involves a sustained record of effectiveness in strategic leadership of high-quality learning, and whose impact is extensive. PFHEA is aligned to Descriptor 4 of the PSF and is often most appropriate to senior individuals whose practice has an impact at institutional level and beyond. Staff wanting to apply for PFHEA should contact the EDU in the first instance as this Descriptor level is supported outside the STAR Framework, and requires individual submission directly to Advance HE.

## **How do the fellowship categories translate to job roles and responsibilities at Imperial?**

As explained above, the different Descriptors or categories of fellowship are not tightly linked to specific job roles, but are instead aligned with the specific context, experience and practice of applicants. Nevertheless, the following example profiles are offered as generally indicative of the types of responsibilities and experiences applicants might be engaged with in order to make a successful claim for a particular category of fellowship. Ultimately, it is your experience and degree of engagement with teaching and not your job title alone that will decide the level at which you choose to apply.

## Example profiles of those working towards recognition

### PhD Student working towards D1

I am a PhD student working as a GTA and I help to support one of our core courses to first year undergraduates. I have been involved in tutoring some small groups of students in a problem class and demonstrating in the practicals, which I have found really rewarding. It feels very different moving from being a student to a teacher, but I enjoy this aspect of my role. I have attended some faculty specific training in addition to workshops provided by the Graduate School and the EDU which covered effective teaching and assessment skills. I am keen to further develop my teaching skills alongside my research work and I am particularly interested in the potential offered by learning technology.

### Supporting Learning and Teaching Staff working towards D1

I work as a laboratory technician and I support my fellow technicians, researchers and students with all experimental matters. I instruct people on the correct use of specialist laboratory equipment and give inductions to new staff into the safe use of our laboratory spaces. My training work varies greatly in frequency and can be one-to-one or with groups of up to 30 students. I have recently completed the EDU's Supporting Learning and Teaching Pathway (SLTP) and I am registered to attend an EDU workshop that will involve getting peer feedback on a microteaching session, as I enjoy my demonstrating work and feel it is important to my role to be as good at this as I can be.

### Clinician working towards D1

I am a Core Medical Trainee working at a teaching hospital and am involved in opportunistic teaching of third and fifth year medical students who are completing their attachment with us. I deliver some bedside teaching and also run some lunchtime seminars for students during their three week attachment. I encourage students to take histories from patients and then present these to me in order that I can give them some verbal feedback on how they could improve on this and make it more effective. I have also been involved in running some mock OSCE stations for students and have given them feedback on aspects of their practice that they would need to develop. I recently attended a one day workshop on clinical teaching and would be keen to get involved in more formal teaching at the medical school.

### Lecturer working towards D2

I am a lecturer at Imperial, I am predominantly involved in research but I also teach a number of topics on three undergraduate courses and a Master's course related to my research area. I also design the final assessment and play a part in aligning the various aspects of one of the undergraduate courses that I teach on. In addition to the mandatory provision required as part of my probation, I have attended a number of teaching workshops provided by the EDU and participated fully in Faculty training. . Given that I am part of the team that writes examination questions, I attended an EDU workshop on setting and marking assessment which I found helped me to better understand how to align questions with the intended course learning outcomes. I would like to develop my teaching further and have enquired about the EDU's PG Cert in University Learning and Teaching; I think this might help my teaching and could be a useful qualification and be the easiest way for me to gain FHEA.

## **Senior Lecturer working towards D2**

I am a Senior Lecturer and have been working at Imperial for six years. I arrived at Imperial having taught courses at other universities for a number of years. I have chaired examination boards and examined at PhD level. Since joining Imperial I have also been an external examiner for another university in London. I have attended faculty specific training at Imperial in addition to the mandatory training; however, I haven't completed a formal teaching qualification as I feel that my experience, together with the professional development I have undertaken, has enabled me to become an effective teacher.

## **Teaching Fellow working towards D2**

I am a Teaching Fellow at Imperial, I was taken on specifically to teach and I have prepared and delivered teaching across all three years of our undergraduate course, but teach mostly the first and second years. I also design and mark course work and exam questions and have recently designed some extra revision tutorials for the final years. I have attended Faculty training and several EDU teaching workshops. I really enjoy teaching and want to take it further; I see my career heading in that direction. I have enrolled on the EDU's PG Cert in University Learning and Teaching; I want to gain FHEA and I plan to try and continue on to the MEd if possible, as I am interested and think this might help me make a case for promotion.

## **Clinician working towards D2**

I work as a physician at a teaching hospital and I am involved in teaching medical students at Imperial. I see small groups of students three or four times a week for bedside teaching sessions aimed at providing some contextualised teaching. This role involves giving both oral and written feedback to students. I also contribute to a second year module on nutrition which involves lecturing the whole year group with a series of follow up seminars with small groups. My interest in teaching developed after attending a number of CPD sessions on teaching skills for clinicians and I am currently enrolled on the PG Cert in University Learning and Teaching at Imperial. If time permits, I may progress on to the Diploma and then complete the full Master's programme.

## **Senior Lecturer working towards D3**

I am a Senior Lecturer with a role as Programme Co-Director and Module Lead for multiple modules. I taught for several years at another UK university where I completed a Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice and gained FHEA. I am keen to apply for promotion and would like to get formal recognition for the experience I have in coordinating teaching colleagues and supporting their ongoing development as educators. I oversee the delivery of teaching across a range of our courses and I make sure that the lecturers, our GTAs and others who contribute to delivery of teaching know what is required of them. I have a large part to play in assessment and for the last four years I have led our Examination Board at the end of each year. I organise and contribute to the training of new academic staff, and I regularly conduct teaching observations for colleagues and give constructive feedback on their teaching. I still undertake some research in my field, but my role has expanded to include more educational leadership activities and management responsibilities.

## How the STAR Framework supports your professional recognition

Imperial College has devised both a 'taught' and 'flexible' path to recognition as Associate Fellow and Fellow (PSF Descriptor categories D1 and D2), and a flexible path to Senior Fellowship (Descriptor category D3). These pathways will involve you fully engaging with the PSF and evidencing this engagement. Although the two pathways are distinct, the design of the STAR Framework allows you to switch between them according to your CPD needs. For example, you may be an early career teaching associate and may gain Associate Fellowship by following the 'Flexible' Path, then be promoted to a Teaching Fellow role and decide to complete Imperial's PG Cert in University Learning and Teaching (ULT) which will allow you to gain Fellowship (Descriptor 2) via this 'Taught' path. Having completed the PG Cert and possibly the PG Diploma ULT, and having gained experience as a course or programme lead, you might then want to build a Senior Fellowship application via a 'Flexible' Path with the support of the STAR Framework.

### D1 Taught paths

#### Supporting Learning and Teaching Pathway (SLTP)

This path is most appropriate if you have a role in supporting teaching and learning or direct student support at the College (for example a librarian, learning technologist, technician, careers adviser, etc.). This pathway includes four taught sessions: 'Introduction to SLTP', 'Introduction to Teaching for Learning', 'Introduction to Assessment for Learning', and a fourth session focusing specifically on helping you participants to start developing an application for Associate Fellowship. The pathway also includes an supporting element of online learning, thus forming a blended learning experience.

You will also be required to complete additional sessions designed to support you in your role. These workshops will be aligned to the Dimensions of the Professional Standards Framework (PSF 2023) so you can map your experiences to the appropriate Areas of Activity, Core Knowledge and Professional Values. On this path you would be strongly encouraged to undertake a session that includes the opportunity to have a presentation recorded on video and to receive feedback from your peers (such as the Communicating Knowledge workshop offered by the EDU). SLTP runs from January to June each year.

For more details about SLTP visit the website:

[www.imperial.ac.uk/staff/educational-development/programmes/supporting-learning-and-teaching-pathway/](http://www.imperial.ac.uk/staff/educational-development/programmes/supporting-learning-and-teaching-pathway/)

If you are a member of clinical staff (e.g. doctors, nurses, physiotherapists etc.) who teach undergraduate medical students in clinical settings, you will be able to complete a series of parallel workshops specific to teaching in these contexts:

- Introduction to Clinical Teaching and/or Introduction to Teaching and Learning in the Faculty of Medicine (depending on teaching responsibility)
- Practical Guide to Small Group Teaching
- Introduction to Feedback and Formative Assessment

These workshops will provide you with the exposure, learning and experience that will prepare you to develop an application for Associate Fellowship (D1), centred on Areas of Activity A2 and A3.

### **Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) taught pathway**

GTAs are eligible to undertake the Graduate Teaching Assistant Programme (GTAP), offered by the Graduate School. The programme is structured around two core courses, *Introduction to Learning and Teaching* and *Introduction to Assessment and Feedback for Learning*. Participants may also attend a filmed microteaching session in order to receive feedback on their planning and teaching in a supportive environment.

As a point of reference before and during the programme, there is an online course, hosted on Blackboard, which provides greater depth on some of the issues and topics discussed in the face-to-face workshops, such as the UK higher education system, key educational theories, inclusivity in learning and teaching, mental health awareness, and practical information about working as a GTA, such as training, Advance HE fellowship, roles, responsibilities and pay. The online section also contains programme information, including course descriptors and learning outcomes, assessment information, and the online GTA Handbook.

In addition to the core content and microteaching sessions, participants may attend optional modules relevant to their practice and disciplinary context. The programme also includes opportunities for participants to attend a one-day reflection and writing retreat, where they can reflect on their practice over the preceding term and receive peer and tutor feedback on their AFHEA applications. Additionally, the retreats will introduce participants to the writing of teaching philosophies, which will be of particular use for GTAs who plan to apply for academic posts in countries where a teaching philosophy is required as part of the application process.

**Participants on either of the D1 taught pathways may also attend a STAR Introductory Workshop and a Pre-submission Workshop to support engagement with the PSF, although they will receive equivalent support as part of the taught provision within those programmes.**

## D2 Taught path (Post Graduate Certificate University Learning and Teaching)

### Background

The Post Graduate Certificate in University Teaching and Learning (PG Cert ULT) is organised into a series of modules, each of which have associated seminars and an assignment alongside some directed reading. These modules build on the ideas introduced in the EDU workshops compulsory to all new College probationary lecturers and/or teaching fellows ('Introduction to Teaching for Learning', 'Introduction to Supervising PhD Students at Imperial' and 'Introduction to Personal Tutoring at Imperial College'). Attendance to these workshops also forms part of the entry requirements to this PG Cert. Alternative EDU workshops of an equivalent length (i.e. 1x1 day, or 2x1/2 day) may be substituted following discussion with the Course Director. You can find more information on the PG Cert webpages: <http://www.imperial.ac.uk/staff/educational-development/programmes/pg-cert-ult/>

### Course Structure

The programme is normally taken over one year and commences in October. As this is a practice-led course, you must have a substantive teaching role in terms of both range and depth of activity. For example, this can include lecturing, tutoring, course organisation, assessment, supervision, bedside or lab teaching. A typical progression through the course year is:

|          |   |   |  |
|----------|---|---|--|
| October  | } | Attend Induction Session and first teaching statement.      |  |
| November |   | }   | Choose three elective modules according to interest in addition to the two core modules. |
| December |   |   |  |
| January  | } | Submit assignments from each module for formative feedback. |  |
| February |   |   |  |
| March    |   |   |  |
| April    |   |   |  |
| May      | } | Arrange three teaching observations.                        |  |
| June     |   | Submit final summative portfolio.                           |  |

Students can choose modules which best fit their interests and practice and may also seek advice from members of academic staff. Most modules have pre-requisites, usually pre-sessional reading and preparation to be submitted in advance of the module seminar. Most modules will run at least twice during the academic year, and students are advised to consider their workload when booking sessions to ensure that they have enough time to complete the reading and assignments in the timescales given. The timescale for submitting assignments for formative feedback is normally six weeks after the date of the module seminar.

The PG Cert is a 30 ECTS credit course (equivalent to one-third of a Master's degree). There are two core modules: 'How Students Learn' (5 ECTS credits) and 'Reflection on Changing Practice' (10 ECTS credits). The latter involves writing an opening and closing statement for your final portfolio. This means you will need to complete three additional modules to account for the final 15 ECTS credits (all remaining modules have a value of 5 ECTS). To gain credit for each module you are required to attend seminars, complete all pre-requisites and required reading, and to submit assignments relating to each specific module for formative feedback.

The PG Cert ULT is aligned with the Professional Standards Framework (PSF 2023). The course modules offer the opportunity for you to engage with the PSF in a manner appropriate to you and your practice. Utilising the PG Cert Modular Reflective Account of Practice (M-RAP) system, you will have the opportunity to submit sections of draft reflective narrative with each formative assignment to receive specific guidance and feedback from the PG Cert tutors (who are all experts in the both the PG Cert material and the Professional Standards Framework). The goal is to support you in developing an application for FHEA at the end of the course that is grounded in your PG Cert learning and your related professional practice. More information about the PG Cert as a taught pathway towards Fellowship can be found in the PG Cert Handbook.

## Flexible paths at D1 and D2

Any staff who teach and/or support learning at Imperial may choose to take a flexible path to their fellowship recognition via the STAR Framework. Those who choose this route will still have access to the full range of EDU workshops and support and will ultimately complete their application in the same way as those on one of the taught pathways.

## Flexible path to D3

There is no taught path for those applying at D3 level. Participants wishing to apply for Senior Fellowship follow the flexible path, and can choose to attend informational workshops and/or fortnightly STAR Individual Support Sessions facilitated by the EDU. In addition, termly workshops on Introduction to the STAR Framework (Senior Fellowship) are available to participants wishing to find out more information on the SFHEA application and review process, and on exploring the career value Senior Fellowship might hold.

## Support available for those on flexible paths

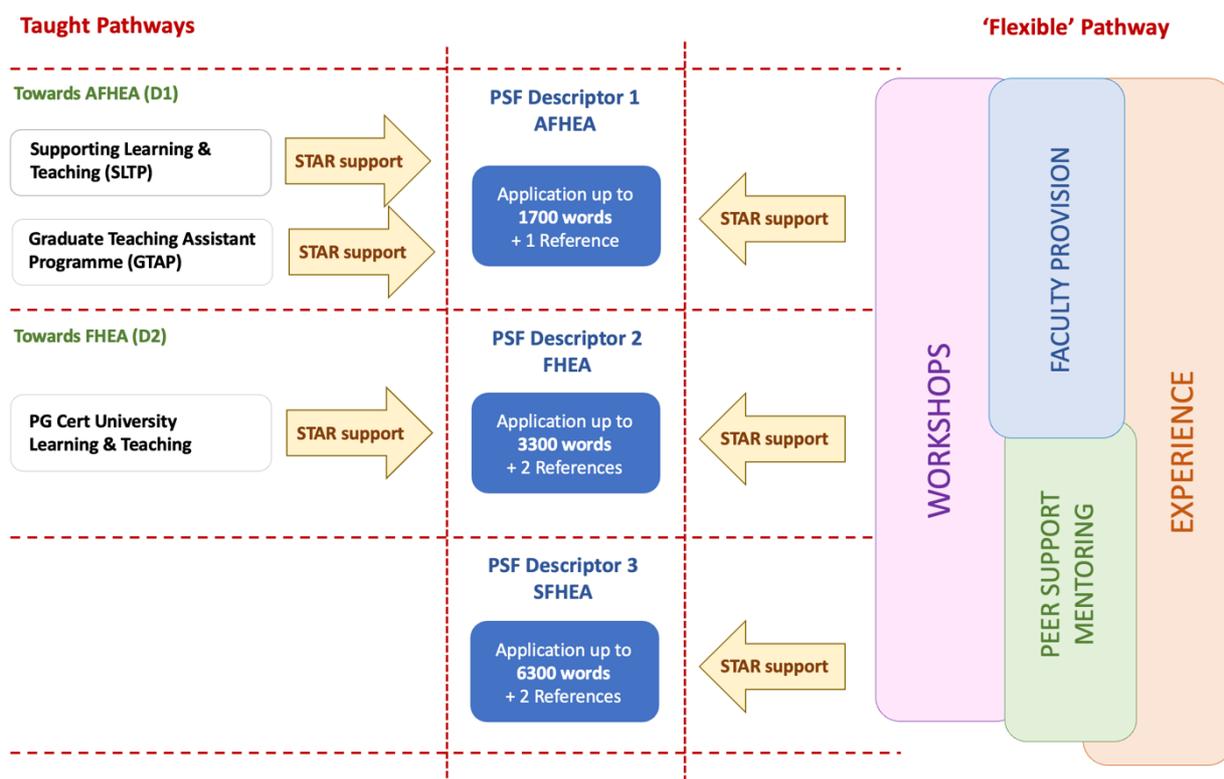
We want to ensure that STAR participants on one of the flexible pathways feel fully-integrated into our learning community. If you choose to take one of the flexible pathways you will have the opportunity to:

- Attend the STAR Introductory Workshop and explore the relevant Descriptor category for your level of experience and responsibility (these run alternately online and in-person to promote accessibility).
- Attend to the fortnightly Individual Support Sessions to allow you to share your ideas for the mapping of your practice against the PSF with an experienced member of the STAR Framework Support Team, and receive guidance on the narrative accounts of practice you will include in your application.
- Attend the STAR Pre-submission Workshop to finalise your application and prepare for submission.

Regardless of your chosen pathway, we strongly advise that **all** those seeking recognition attend the 'Introduction to the STAR Framework' workshop as this provides a solid base from which to begin your application. The workshop will equip you with the key information you need when preparing your application, and guidance about which fellowship category might be most

appropriate for you on the current stage of your professional journey. Another useful resource for helping you determine which category of fellowship to apply for is the Fellowship Category Tool provided by Advance HE. You can access it at: <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/fellowship/fellowship#fct>.

## Overview of the taught and flexible paths within the STAR framework



*NB: the word counts indicated for applications in each category of fellowship include the Context Statement of up to 300 words, which is not evaluated against the PSF.*

## Completing and submitting your application

All applications should be submitted online via the STAR Framework submission portal. Application templates and guidance specific to each category of fellowship are included in the Application Packs that you can download from the STAR Framework website to guide and help you structure your reflective narrative. You can construct your application within the template, and then convert it to PDF format for online submission. You can access the Application Packs here:

<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/staff/star-framework/>

At all Descriptor levels, you should consider the following reflective question prompts to structure your written commentary:

1. What did you do? Concise description of engagement including your own role and context
2. How did you do it? A description and explanation of the approach/methodology you employed
3. Why did you do it that way? Evidence and rationale for your choices: Consider the Knowledge (K) & Professional Values (V) Dimensions of the PSF
4. What difference did it make? Impact on learners/teachers/self/institution – how do you know? What was the evidence of that impact or outcome?

Each application must be accompanied by either one or two Supporting Statements from referees (**one** for D1 applications or **two** for D2 and D3 applications). These referees should be in a position to comment on the development of your teaching and learning practice and perhaps support your future professional development in this area. These people could be your line manager, supervisor, mentor, peer or Head of Department/Unit (please refer to the Application Guides and Supporting Statement Templates relevant to each fellowship category for further details – these are included in the Application Packs).

If possible, the Supporting Statement(s) should be based on a conversation with each referee. The purpose of the references is to broadly corroborate the claims made in your application, and to verify that they are accurate and fair. Supporting Statements should therefore explicitly support your application and **not** be generic academic references. It is your responsibility to identify referees, collect your Supporting Statements and to include them in your STAR application as PDF files.

## Choosing your referees

### Who should I choose?

You should select referees who can comment on your teaching ability and, if you are applying for D3, your contribution to relevant educational leadership or influencing activities. This might include colleagues who have seen you teach first-hand or who have seen some form of evaluation of your teaching. For a D3 application you might choose a colleague who has collaborated with you on strategic initiatives and who can attest to the influence you have had on other staff. A referee does not necessarily have to be a senior colleague, so you could choose a peer or even those in a less senior role who are in a position to comment on your teaching.

## How should I approach referees?

We suggest that you send an initial email to sound out your colleague's willingness to write a Supporting Statement for you and, if they agree to your request, you could send them your completed application and the Supporting Statement Template for the category of fellowship you are applying for.

STAR Framework Supporting Statement Templates can be found here:

<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/staff/star-framework/forms/>

## Online submission of application and Supporting Statements

You should submit your application documents as PDF files via the STAR Framework online submission portal. You will need to have active Imperial login credentials (College username and email address):

1. Click the 'Apply Now' button on the 'Submit your application' page of the STAR Framework website (<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/staff/star-framework/submit/>).
2. Enter your Imperial username and password.
3. Click 'Add new item' at the bottom of the page.
4. Complete your personal details and attach your application and Supporting Statements as PDFs. If you are ready to submit, check the 'submit' box.
5. Click Save.

There are currently five Review Cycles each academic year. When you submit an application it will be assigned to the next available Cycle to be reviewed. The dates and submission deadlines for each Cycle are published on the STAR Framework website. Applicants should normally expect to receive notification of the outcome within three weeks after the submission deadline for each Review Cycle.

## Review criteria for applications

All applications will be reviewed independently by two Reviewers. They will normally include one with expertise relevant to your main discipline or area of professional practice, and one with expertise in Higher Education learning and teaching (for example, from the EDU or Graduate School). All Reviewers hold an appropriate category of Fellowship (FHEA or SFHEA) and are highly experienced and trained in the process of reviewing applications for fellowship against the Dimensions and Descriptors of the Professional Standards Framework (PSF 2023).

All applications will be judged against relevant Descriptors of the Professional Standards Framework (PSF 2023). **All applicants are strongly encouraged to read the STAR Framework *Application Guide* and the *Advance HE Guide to the PSF 2023 Dimensions* documents relevant to the category of fellowship you are applying for** (these are included in the Application Packs for each fellowship category).

The STAR Framework is designed to be a developmental process, and you will get feedback on your application regardless of outcome to guide your continued engagement and development in

your teaching and learning practice. The feedback you receive should highlight good practice and areas for development, and may also make suggestions for future practice.

If your application is not commended for the fellowship award upon first submission, you will receive feedback highlighting good practice, areas for development and required amendments for resubmission. You will be invited to resubmit your application within four weeks of the date on which you receive the outcome (if you wish your resubmission to be reviewed within the same Review Cycle). You can make use of our regular STAR Individual Support Sessions to discuss the feedback and seek guidance on how best to address it.

In some cases, reviewers may recommend that an award cannot be upon first submission due to insufficient experience or engagement with relevant teaching and learning practice. The Reviewers' feedback would highlight possible areas and activities the applicant could undertake to enhance their experience. In such a case, the applicant may wish to focus on developing their experience over a longer period of time rather than attempting to resubmit their application with the four-week window. This is absolutely fine. If the four-week resubmission deadline passes, nothing is lost – the application, when submitted, would be treated as a new application and assigned to the next available Review Cycle.

Normally, an application would only be considered for the category of fellowship applied for (i.e., we would not award an alternative category of fellowship). However, in cases where a D2 application is referred because the applicant's current practice does not enable them to demonstrate the required sufficiency for FHEA, but where it would, in the opinion of the Reviewers, fully meet the requirements for AFHEA, it is possible that the applicant would be offered AFHEA if they do not already hold it, so that they may receive appropriate recognition for their current practice as they work towards a future D2 application. This outcome would not be a 'default' alternative offer for a referred D2 application, but it would be carefully considered in particular cases after consultation between the applicant and the STAR Framework Director.

Quality and standards of applications and the assessment process will be reviewed by an External Examiner who will report annually to Senate through the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC). The External Examiner will review a representative (typically 25%) sample of all fellowship applications, decisions and feedback, and will have the right to observe review processes underway in any Review Cycle.

## Appeals

An applicant can make a **process related** appeal against the outcome of an application to the Director of the STAR Framework.

In practice, as the STAR Framework is a *developmental* pathway (i.e., there are no definitive 'failures' of an application as such – applicants always have supported opportunities to develop further to meet the criteria for award) such appeals are very rare.

Appeals can only be made on the grounds of an identified flaw in the review *process*. If the STAR Framework Director agrees there may be grounds and considers an appeal, the final decision of the Director on the matter will be final.

## Maintaining good standing

The time taken to progress between categories of fellowship, if desirable and appropriate, will depend on an individual's own professional context. However, it is important to keep up to date with your educational development in order to maintain good standing. This could include attending or presenting at education-related events such as the Talking Teaching seminar series or the annual Festival of Learning and Teaching, by acting as an external examiner or serving as a member of an Education Committee, etc. Having achieved their STAR recognition, an individual may also choose to be involved in supporting others. For example, an individual who has achieved Senior Fellowship (D3) may act as a reviewer and/or a mentor for a departmental colleague. Someone who has achieved Fellowship (D2) may wish to advise other applicants in their department.

Maintaining good standing is an Advance HE requirement. Specifically, it is expected that once awarded a level of fellowship, the holder will continue to work according to their level of fellowship, or outperform their current Descriptor standard. Applicants are encouraged to keep a record of their professional development activity, as all Fellows should be able to demonstrate compliance with (at least) their awarded level at any given time.

The EDU offers a wide range of workshops to support continued educational development, details of which can be found on our website:

[www.imperial.ac.uk/staff/educational-development/workshops/](http://www.imperial.ac.uk/staff/educational-development/workshops/)

## Frequently asked questions

### **Do I have to take part in the STAR Framework?**

No. However, it is a useful and portable form of professional recognition and recognised in the UK Higher Education sector as well as internationally. It provides formal recognition of your commitment to professionalism in teaching and learning in higher education, and demonstrates that your practice is aligned with the Professional Standards Framework (PSF 2023).

### **Do I have to pay?**

The STAR Framework is free for all those with appropriate contractual relationship with Imperial College which is a subscribing member of Advance HE. If you are not sure, please contact us.

### **Which level of fellowship is suitable for me?**

See page 6 of this Handbook for initial guidance. You should also refer to the *PSF 2023*, the *STAR Framework Application Guides* and the *Advance HE Guides to the PSF 2023 Dimension* for each category of fellowship (these documents are all included in the STAR Framework Application Packs). You can also explore the Advance HE Fellowship Category Tool online at <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/form/fellowship-decision-tool-2023>

### **Do I have to start at Associate Fellow (D1) level?**

No. You can start at the level of fellowship most appropriate to your experience and practice.

### **Is there a time limit between getting FHEA status and SFHEA status?**

No. It will depend on your own professional development needs.

### **Do I need approval from my line manager to be involved?**

There is no need for any official approval from a line manager or supervisor, but it is better to talk to them and get their approval if you can. This is a CPD approach and it works best if you work within your context so that you can get the most benefit out of it.

### **Should I do the taught or flexible pathway?**

The choice is yours. The STAR Framework is designed to be flexible and work in a wide range of professional contexts. The taught path to Associate Fellowship (D1) allows you to make the best use of departmental &/or Graduate School GTA training or the College's and Faculties' training requirement for most probationary academics. The taught path to Fellowship (D2) involves a PG Cert, doing this gives an additional academic qualification BUT this also means there are the extra academic requirements you would expect from a Master's-level course. The flexible path gives more freedom and is not bound by these academic requirements. Senior Fellowship (D3) is only offered via the flexible route. If you are not sure, talk to others you may know who are already involved or feel free to contact us via the website. Remember, regardless of which pathway you take, the application and review processes ultimately occur with the STAR Framework, and they are identical for all.

## **Can I move between the taught and flexible pathways?**

In general, yes, as all of the pathways have a common end point in terms of submission of an application.

## **What support is available to me if I'm on the flexible path?**

If you choose to take one of the flexible pathways you will have the opportunity to:

- attend the STAR Introductory Workshop and identify your relevant descriptor category for your level of experience and responsibility.
- come to the fortnightly Individual Support Sessions to allow to share your ideas for mapping your practice against the PSF and receive guidance on how to focus the narrative of your application.
- attend the STAR Pre-submission workshop to finalise your submission.

Those who choose this route will still have access to the full range of EDU workshops and support and will complete their application in the same way as those on one of the taught pathways.

## **I have already done a teaching qualification elsewhere**

The STAR Framework is a CPD process, and therefore all previous qualifications and experience related to teaching and learning in HE will be helpful in writing your application.

## **I have already completed Imperial's PG Cert ULT or SLTP; what's my next step?**

Having already completed these courses you will be well placed to write your application. Book a slot in one of the Individual Support Sessions to discuss your options.

## **I already have FHEA; can this count towards the PG Cert ULT?**

All relevant education experience can form part of your PG Cert. Details of this will depend on personal context and will be considered on an individual basis. However, the PG Cert is an academic qualification and as such is subject to the normal Registry and academic regulations regarding entry and AP(E)L. For more information please contact the Programme Coordinator, Ms Vilma Rupekaite by email at [pgcertult@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:pgcertult@imperial.ac.uk).

## **How much writing will be involved in the application?**

Applications for each of the different Descriptor levels have a different word count.

- Applications for Associate Fellowship (D1) – up 1,700 words (including 300-word Context Statement)
- Applications for Fellowship (D2) – up to 3,300 words (including 300-word Context Statement)
- Applications for Senior Fellowship (D3) – up to 6,300 words (including 300-word Context Statement)

Please refer to the Application Guides and the Application Templates for the relevant Descriptors for further details.

## How long will it take to complete?

The length of time to achieve STAR recognition will depend on an individual's professional circumstances and experience. An applicant who is new to teaching may take longer to complete their application compared to someone who already has a lot of experience and can put together an application relatively quickly. But it is important to remember that this process is developmental and not competitive.

## What post nominals can I use?

If your application is successful, you can use the following post nominals:

**AFHEA** – (Associate Fellow of the Higher Education Academy)

**FHEA** – (Fellow of the Higher Education Academy)

**SFHEA** – (Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy)

**PFHEA** – (Principal Fellow of the Higher Education Academy)

## What other documentation should I refer to as I prepare my application?

In addition to this *STAR Framework Participant Handbook* and the *PSF 2023*, you should carefully read the following documents:

- The *STAR Framework Application Guide*
- The *STAR Framework Application Templates*
- The *Advance HE Guides to the PSF 2023 Dimensions*

There are Descriptor-specific versions of each of the above documents, and you can download them all in the Application Packs for each fellowship category from:

<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/staff/star-framework/forms/>

## What happens after I have gained recognition?

Participating in the STAR Framework is part of an ongoing process of professional recognition for your teaching and/or supporting learning activities. We hope that you will engage with the categories of fellowship as a useful framework around which to focus your ongoing educational career development. This will serve to improve your career prospects at Imperial and beyond. It is therefore worth keeping documentation that relates to your teaching activities as this might prove useful for a future application. This could be in the form of student feedback, emails from colleagues or even your own reflective diary. You could also stay involved in the STAR Framework, mentoring others from your discipline and perhaps reviewing applications as a STAR Framework Reviewer. This sort of involvement can help you gain experience, and could be useful in your own future applications for other categories of fellowship. You may also consider being involved in other education events such as the annual Imperial Festival of Learning and Teaching, the Talking Teaching seminar series, the CHERSNet educational research network, or one of the College's other educational networks.

## STAR Framework contact details

You can contact the STAR team by email at:  
[staradmin@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:staradmin@imperial.ac.uk)