

Fellowship

Supporting Statement Template

Your Name	Malcolm MacLean
Institution/organisation/other	UWTSD
Job Title	Academic Director (Interim), Doctoral College; Doctoral Pool Supervisory Manager
Email address	m.maclea@uwtsd.ac.uk
Your Fellowship Status (if appropriate)	
Relationship to Applicant	Co-worker
How long have you worked with the applicant (insert dates)	November 2021 to present
Declaration	In submitting your supporting statement, you are confirming that the applicant's submission relates to their higher education professional practice and that your statement is your own work and has been written specifically for this applicant. If the professional integrity of the supporting statement is in question it will not be accepted. I confirm that I have read and agree with the declaration above. <i>M MacLean</i> Date: 29 July, 2024

Supporting Statement

Please provide your statement to support the applicant's submission for Fellow in the following section. You are required to comment on the applicant's recent higher education practice, providing examples to support your statement wherever possible.

In completing this supporting statement you are confirming that you have read the Guidance for referees. In addition to Descriptor 2 criteria, as a guide, it is important that you comment on the following in your supporting statement:

- your own experience of the applicant's recent HE practice;
- if you have been involved in peer observation of the applicant's teaching and/or support of learning, please draw on examples from this;
- any good or innovative practice and/or contribution to developments by the applicant in teaching and/or supporting learning within his/her discipline as appropriate;
- your perspective on the practical examples provided within the application to illustrate the requirements of Fellow.

Two sides of A4 will normally be sufficient for this category of Fellowship.

I have worked closely with Nina since November 2021, initially both of us in training and development related posts, and for the last 11 months and additionally as Acting Academic Director of the Doctoral College. We meet regularly in planned sessions to consider common issues, frequently in less formal conversation exploring common training and development and other concerns, and less often delivering training and development sessions, and in other, often student-centred, events. During that time I have seen ample evidence that Nina not only meets but exceeds the criteria for Fellowship of the HEA, and actively engages with all five areas of activity

When I joined the College in November 2021, taking up a post that included training and development of PGR supervisors, Nina was already in post and had taken initial steps to develop training and development activities for PGR students. This initial planning had drawn on her recent experience as a doctoral candidate, the provisions of the Vitae Researcher Development Framework, and consultation with experienced PGR supervisors in the Doctoral College network. I noted in particular that those initial activities drew on two principal sources – that advice about UWTSd circumstances and therefore more immediate needs, and plans and programmes developing in other parts of UWTSd that were either directly relevant to PGR students or had been specifically developed to address issues and concerns in PGR programmes. The consequence was a two-path programme, one interim focused on urgent current needs and work across the university addressing PGR students, and a second with a longer term vision for full implementation in the next academic year providing structured and coherent training and development activities centred on the shape of the PGR student lifecycle, emphasizing but not determined only by the key milestones that need to be met by PGR students.

Since then Nina has built a comprehensive PGR student training and development programme informed by four key inputs:

- 1) students: student need and requirements as informed by feedback during existing training sessions, formal evaluation provisions in training sessions; advice and insight derived from the regular student drop in sessions she hosts on all four campuses with PGR delivery as well as on-line, issues identified by PGR student representatives on the Doctoral College Board, and other less structured or formalized engagements and discussions;



- 2) supervisors: for issues as identified in formal and informal settings, including direct approaches, matters raised by Institute Managers of Research Degrees in DCB and other discussions, and more general supervisor and IMORD concerns that we jointly determine includes a student training element;
- 3) UWTSD Professional Services units: Nina has an impressive network of contacts across the university, and frequently draws on their advice and insights for training and development needs. These links, as I see them as both a co-trainer and as AAD, include Student Services, INSPIRE, and Library and Learning Resources;
- 4) wider sector advice: including academic and other inputs identifying developing needs and shifts in PGR circumstances, sector-wide networks including an all-Wales network focused on student support and advice, and baseline provisions as seen in expectations outlined by HEFCW, in benchmarks such as those from Vitae through the RDF, and similar sources.

These four areas of attention mean that while the student training and development Nina has developed is well grounded in local needs and alert to both student and institutional needs, she is also actively engaged with and alert to sector and scholarly developments more generally. Her reflexive engagement with these questions of training, development, and student experience are also fed into the more general activities of the Doctoral College through the fortnightly staff team meeting. Nina also manages the Doctoral College Community Platform providing, amongst other things, access to UWTSD training and development activities, and publicising external training and development programmes, student activities, and resources useful for PGR study.

Nina's work focuses exclusively on students at the thesis stage of their programmes. This is a notoriously difficult group to get access to and actively incorporate into activities, as lone researchers working closely with a supervisory team in an individualised project. The recent move away from a model exclusively using on-line delivery means that she has adapted the programme to a hybrid model, basing sessions on various campuses, and working with a range of delivery designs from one-off sessions, repeat sessions, linked series, and block activities such as the PGR Summer School. I have both sat in on and co-delivered sessions with Nina and note her attention to variations in style and form, structured opportunities for student engagement as well as open opportunities for feedback, discussion, and engagement. Goals are tailored to the character of each session, although there is a strong orientation student well-being, and autonomous researcher development both grounded in a student-centred approach.

Nina's work is therefore grounded in a community of scholars approach. That this is so may be seen clearly in both the PGR student research conference and the Doctoral College Summer School that she organizes each year. Both these events are structured in way that encourages students to transcend subject and programme groups as well as actively engage with others outside their programme cohorts. This helps build an inclusive and engaging learning environment that supports PGR students and allows them to recognize commonalities with others, thereby supporting their immediate study needs and their career development as researchers.

I am also aware that Nina actively engages in CPD activities for her own professional development, including one-off sessions, regular programmes through groups such as the National Centre for Research Methods. Insights from these are drawn into our regular meetings and discussions where we consider training and development programmes, and as such Nina shapes the student programme in the light of current developments, and influences the supervisor training and development activities also.

I therefore unreservedly endorse Nina's application for Fellowship of the HEA.