



Senior Fellowship

Supporting Statement Template

Your Name	Jaliya de Silva
Applicant Name	Ka Po Chong
Your Institution/organisation/other	Institute of Management and Health
Your current role	Lecturer
Email address	j.de-silva@uwtsd.ac.uk
Your Fellowship Status (if appropriate)	Fellow
Relationship to Applicant	Colleague
How long have you worked with the applicant (insert dates)	20 Aug, 2023 to current
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. Date:23rd Feb 2025



Supporting Statement

Please provide your statement to verify and endorse the applicant's submission for Senior Fellow in the following section. You are required to comment on the applicant's recent higher education practice (usually within the last 3-5 years) providing examples to support your statement wherever possible.

In completing this Supporting Statement you are confirming that you have read the [Advance HE Senior Fellow Guidance for Referees writing a Supporting Statement](#). In association with the [Descriptor 3 criteria of the PSF 2023](#) as a guide, it is important that you comment on the following in your Supporting Statement:

- + your own personal experience and knowledge of the applicant's effective, inclusive and comprehensive HE practice;
- + your perspective on the practical examples provided within the application to illustrate the requirements of Senior Fellow, focusing on the way(s) in which the applicant has effectively influenced or led on other colleagues' HE practice.

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

I am writing to verify and endorse Ben Ka Po Chong's application for Senior Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy. I have worked alongside Ben Ka Po Chong as a fellow Lecturer at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David since 2023 and have direct, first-hand knowledge of his professional practice in teaching and supporting learning in higher education. I can confirm that the practice described in his application presents a fair and accurate reflection of his work.

Ben Ka Po Chong has consistently demonstrated a commitment to enhancing teaching practice that extends well beyond his own classroom. From my experience of working with him, he is a colleague who actively seeks to support and develop others, and who approaches pedagogic challenges with both creativity and scholarly rigour. I have observed this across several areas of his practice, which I outline below.

Ben Ka Po Chong has been the primary advocate for the use of the university's immersive learning rooms within our programme area. Ben Ka Po Chong who recognised its potential for hospitality education and took the initiative to explore how it could be integrated into teaching. He shared his experience with me directly



and encouraged me to visit the facility. I was genuinely impressed by the immersive environment and its possibilities for experiential learning. Ben Ka Po Chong also introduced the technology to other colleagues, including colleagues in wine and viticulture education and in business and management, actively arranging visits and facilitating meetings with the university's immersive technology team. His approach was not to impose his methods but to encourage colleagues to consider how the technology might work within their own disciplinary contexts. This sustained effort to champion a new learning technology across disciplines is, in my view, a clear example of his leadership in pedagogic innovation.

Ben Ka Po Chong and I are currently co-developing a conceptual paper on immersive pedagogy in hospitality education, in which I am second author. This collaboration arose directly from Ben Ka Po Chong's initiative. Through our discussions, he has demonstrated a thoughtful engagement with the theoretical underpinnings of immersive learning, drawing on experiential learning theory and multimedia learning principles to develop a pedagogic framework. What I find particularly noteworthy is his honest reflection on the mixed outcomes from his own immersive room sessions. Rather than presenting the technology as uniformly successful, he has critically evaluated why some sessions produced stronger engagement than others, and he has used this evaluation to inform the scholarly framework we are developing together. This capacity for critical self-reflection, and his willingness to use it productively, is characteristic of his broader approach to professional practice.

Beyond the immersive room, I have observed Ben Ka Po Chong's influence on colleagues' practice in other ways. He is a colleague who is regularly consulted by others for guidance and support. I am aware of his mentoring of a colleague in research methodology, where he has provided sustained support on qualitative methods and research ethics that has directly informed that colleague's teaching of dissertation students. I have also observed his collaborative approach to programme development, including his willingness to share teaching materials, cover colleagues' teaching during absences, and offer pedagogic observations that support others' development. These activities reflect a pattern of collegial generosity and professional commitment that is sustained rather than occasional.



Ben Ka Po Chong brings a distinctive combination of professional expertise and scholarly engagement to his role. His extensive international industry experience in luxury hospitality, together with his rare specialist credentials in sake education, enriches both the curriculum and his colleagues' understanding of the discipline. His continuing investment in professional development, including further sommelier and sake qualifications, demonstrates a genuine commitment to ensuring that his teaching remains informed by current professional practice. He approaches his work with an energy and dedication that is evident to all who work alongside him.

In my professional judgement, Ben Ka Po Chong's practice demonstrates a sustained record of leading and influencing the teaching practice of colleagues, underpinned by a comprehensive understanding of pedagogy and a genuine commitment to enhancing the quality of student learning. His practice is effective, inclusive, and extends significantly beyond his own direct teaching. I am confident that his application meets the requirements of Descriptor 3 of the Professional Standards Framework 2023, and I endorse it without reservation.