

UNIVERSITY OF WALES TRINITY SAINT DAVID CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

APPLICATION FOR SENIOR FELLOW

Before you start, you will need to refer to the following documents/guidance:

The Advance HE **Fellowship Category Tool** will help you to determine whether Senior Fellowship is the most appropriate category of Fellowship for you at this point;

- + The **Professional Standards Framework for teaching and supporting learning in higher education** (PSF 2023) – the award of Senior Fellowship is based on the criteria of Descriptor 3 (PSF 2023) being evidenced;
- + **Senior Fellowship Applicant Guidance** and **Guide to the PSF 2023 Dimensions - Senior Fellowship (D3)**

Senior Fellowship is based on meeting **Descriptor 3 (D3) of the PSF 2023** and your **Account of Professional Practice** is the core of your application.

The Account of Professional Practice consists of:

- a Context Statement (see Applicant Guidance: Section 4.2)
- a Reflective Narrative (see Applicant Guidance: Section 6.2)
- two Case Studies (see Applicant Guidance: Section 6.3)

There is a 6,000-word limit shared across all three elements plus citations (overall maximum of 6,500 words). Please note that the Academic Office checks the word count as part of the submission process)

In addition, **Supporting Statements from two referees** (see Applicant Guidance 7) will need to be submitted with your application. **The Supporting Statements** will verify and endorse that what you write about in your Account of Professional Practice represents your practice in a genuine way.

You will need to **continue to refer to the applicant guidance and Descriptor 3 of the PSF 2023** as you draft your application to ensure that you are writing to meet the requirements.

The award of Senior Fellowship is based on evidence of your effective and inclusive practice; you might briefly mention future plans as part of identifying what has worked well and any changes you plan to make in future, however, your application will be judged on whether your evidence of recent practice (typically over the last 3-5 years) meets the requirements of Descriptor 3.

Your evidence against Descriptor 3 will be written into your **Reflective Narrative and two Case Studies**.

For Descriptor 3, the examples you select to write about need to demonstrate how your practice supports high quality learning through leading/ influencing the teaching and/or learning support

practices of others (colleagues, peers, mentees, internal/external, etc.

When you have finalised your application you will need to send the completed form to your referees so that they can write their Supporting Statements. Please direct your referees to the [Senior Fellowship Guidance for Referees writing a Supporting Statement](#). The referees need to return their Supporting Statements for you to upload with your application.

Your application is submitted first to the Academic Office **via the appropriate submission link on Moodle (Advance HE Fellowship module)**.

SECTION ONE:

NAME (as you would like it to appear on your certificate)	Zakiyyah Ahmed
INSTITUTE/ DEPARTMENT/PROFESSIONAL UNIT	Health and Social Care
POSITION (E.g. Lecturer/Senior Lecturer/Principal Lecturer/Director of Discipline/Other (please specify)	Lecturer in Health and Social Care Weekend Coordinator Research Supervisor
ROLE (E.g. Lecturer/Programme Manager/Admissions Tutor/Module Leader/Other (please specify)	Lecturer in Health and Social Care Weekend Coordinator Research Supervisor
Referees Please could you tick the box if you have sent in your referees' statements? (Please be aware if we do not receive your referees' statements at the time of the submission or a maximum of 2 days after the panel submission date then your application will be passed to the next Panel meeting). If your Supporting Statements are not included with your application, you must ensure your referees send their Supporting Statements to the Academic Office by the deadline. The Academic Office will not chase referees.	Yes ☒ No ☐
Date of Training	2025
Mentor	Glenda Tinney

SECTION 2: Context Statement

Write your Context statement here (up to 300 words).

References and citations are to be listed in a dedicated field below.

Please note that we will not accept diagrams, images or any other documents/appendices such as CVs.

I have worked across two higher education institutions, the University of Wolverhampton and the University of Wales Trinity Saint David(UWTSD), where my practice demonstrates influence on colleagues' teaching, supervision development and programme coordination.

I am a Lecturer and Research Supervisor supporting students across multiple cohorts(A2;A5).

My role has progressed to postgraduate supervision, requiring engagement with research design, ethics and milestone planning(K2;K3;K5). Through this progression, I have actively contributed to shaping supervision practices by sharing structured approaches to milestone planning and research guidance within teaching teams. This has enabled colleagues in adopting more consistent supervisory frameworks, strengthening clarity in expectations and contributing to improved student progression.

As a module leader, I coordinated module delivery, aligned learning outcomes with assessment and facilitated communication across teaching teams(A1;A4). I led discussions on assessment clarity that resulted in colleagues refining assessment briefings to strengthen alignment between criteria and expectations. This resulted in greater consistency in assessment design across the module team and reduced student uncertainty. The approaches developed during this period have continued to inform programme level practices and ongoing discussions around clarity and consistency.

I contribute to weekend provision for predominantly mature and returning learners. Through analysing structured student feedback and contributing to programme level discussions, I have influenced how teaching is structured across weekend modules(A4;K4). This has supported colleagues in adapting delivery approaches to enhance engagement and retention while maintaining academic standards and ensuring inclusive practice(D3.2;V1;V2).

My professional background in health and social care informs my approach to inclusive and applied learning. Drawing on this experience, I support colleagues in embedding structured practice based approaches that respond to the needs of diverse learner groups(V1;V4).

Additionally, my doctoral research on intergenerational practice informs both my teaching and my guidance to others, enabling colleagues to integrate research informed and socially relevant perspectives into their practice(A5;V3).

SECTION 3: Reflective Narrative

Write your reflective narrative here.

References and citations are to be listed in a dedicated field below.

Please note that we **will not accept** diagrams, images or any other documents/appendices such as CVs.

I prioritise structure, clarity and student support within my teaching and supervision practice, recognising these as central to inclusive and effective learning. Over time, my role has extended beyond direct teaching into actively influencing colleagues' approaches to assessment, supervision, inclusive delivery and lifelong learning across both institutional and community contexts. This influence has developed through sustained programme level engagement, modelling practice and leading discussions through which colleagues have adapted their own teaching and supervision (D3.1;D3.3;V4;V5).

A key shift in my development has been recognising that influence in higher education is rarely exercised through formal authority. Instead, it tends to emerge through evidence informed dialogue, modelling of practice, and sustained collaboration with colleagues (D3.1;V3;V5) (Bolden, 2011;Harris, 2013). This has required me to reconsider my role not simply as a lecturer responsible for my own modules, but as someone helping to shape how teaching and learning are collectively understood and enacted.

This shift has not been straightforward, approaches that have worked effectively within my own teaching have not always translated easily into wider programme contexts. At times, this has required me to rethink how ideas are communicated, particularly where colleagues hold different assumptions about rigour, autonomy or curriculum priorities. It has also highlighted the importance of working within institutional constraints, where change often needs to be incremental and negotiated rather than imposed.

An example of this can be seen in my work on assessment clarity within health and social care programmes (A3;K2;K3;V2). Across multiple modules, students repeatedly contacted me to clarify terms such as “critical engagement” and “application of theory”. Initially, these appeared to be isolated queries. However, as similar questions emerged across cohorts and modules, it became clear that this reflected a more systemic issue in how expectations were being communicated.

What became evident was not a lack of ability, but a gap between formal academic language and students’ understanding of how this should be demonstrated in their work. This distinction was important. Many students were engaging with relevant literature and concepts, yet were unable to translate this into forms that met assessment criteria. Without addressing this, there was a risk that students would underperform despite demonstrating appropriate levels of engagement.

As institutional processes did not allow modification of formally approved assessment descriptors, I developed a supplementary guide to support interpretation. This translated key terms into clearer language, provided examples of different levels of engagement, and illustrated the distinction between descriptive and analytical writing (A1;A3;K2;K4;V1). The intention was not to simplify standards, but to make expectations more transparent and therefore more attainable.

This process also strengthened my understanding of how institutional validation and quality assurance frameworks shape assessment design. Rather than enabling direct structural change, these frameworks require enhancement to take place through aligned practices and supporting materials (K5;V3). In this sense, the intervention operated within existing constraints while still addressing a clear gap in student understanding.

While this work began within my own teaching, I shared the supplementary guidance through programme level discussions and informal mentoring with colleagues. This resulted in colleagues integrating similar explanatory materials alongside formal assessment briefs within their own modules, across multiple modules within the programme. As a result, this increased consistency in how assessment expectations were communicated across multiple modules within the programme, although the extent of adoption varied depending on module context and

individual teaching approaches. This demonstrated how small, practice based interventions can influence wider teaching practices when supported through dialogue and shared evidence (D3.1;D3.3).

Not all responses were immediately supportive. Some colleagues questioned whether simplifying language risked lowering academic standards. This concern required careful engagement. Rather than dismissing these concerns, I engaged colleagues through evidence informed dialogue, presenting anonymised student work, recurring queries and moderation feedback. This enabled colleagues to critically evaluate their own assessment practices and reconsider how expectations were communicated. As a result, several colleagues adapted their briefing approaches to incorporate clearer scaffolding, reflecting a shift from viewing clarity as simplification towards recognising it as a mechanism for enhancing academic rigour and accessibility (K3;V3;D3.1).

This helped to reframe the discussion, the focus shifted from “simplification” to accessibility and transparency. In practice, this meant recognising that clarity enables students to engage more effectively with academic expectations, rather than diluting them (K3;V3;D3.1). Over time, this perspective became more widely accepted, although not universally so.

The impact of this work was evident, though uneven, there was a reduction in clarification emails prior to submission deadlines, and fewer repeated questions during teaching sessions. More

importantly, there was improved alignment between assessment criteria and the work submitted (K3;A3;D3.2).

At the same time, this intervention did not resolve all challenges, some students continued to struggle, particularly where confidence, time constraints or external pressures were significant factors. This reinforced the limits of focusing solely on assessment clarity, and the need to situate such work within a broader understanding of student experience.

This experience informed my progression into supervising Master's research projects, where issues of clarity and structure presented in different ways (A2;A5;K2;K3). I observed that inconsistent approaches to milestone planning were contributing to uncertainty, particularly around ethics approval, methodological design and drafting stages (K2;K5;V1). Some students progressed effectively, while others experienced delays that were not necessarily related to ability, but to unclear expectations and timelines.

Drawing on the UK Council for Graduate Education's Good Supervisory Practice Framework, I introduced more structured milestone planning, alongside written follow up summaries after supervision meetings (A4;K3;K5;V3) (UKCGE, 2019). This aimed to provide clearer points of reference for students, while still allowing flexibility in how they approached their research.

This approach also required alignment with institutional expectations, particularly in relation to progression and ethics processes (K5). As with assessment design, this highlighted the importance of working within formal frameworks while seeking to improve the student experience through practice based adjustments.

A recurring tension emerged around the balance between structure and autonomy. One colleague expressed concern that increased structure might limit students' independence. This required careful consideration. While autonomy is central to postgraduate study, my experience suggested that a lack of structure often led to uncertainty rather than independence.

Research supports the view that clarity in expectations can support autonomy by enabling students to make informed decisions about their work (Wisker, 2012). However, applying this in practice was not always straightforward. Some students responded positively to structured guidance, while others required a more flexible approach. This reinforced the need to adapt supervision strategies to individual students, rather than applying a uniform model.

Rather than promoting a single approach, I modelled structured supervision practices within my own work and shared examples of student progression with colleagues through informal discussions and supervisory exchanges. This supported colleagues in reflecting on their own approaches, with several incorporating clearer milestone planning and written follow up

practices into their supervision. This contributed to greater programme level consistency in supervisory expectations, while still allowing flexibility in individual supervisory styles (D3.1;D3.2;D3.3;V5).

My work with weekend cohorts at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David further developed my understanding of how teaching must respond to student context (A2;A4;K1;K2;V1;V2). Many students attend after demanding working weeks, with additional caring responsibilities and long travel times. These factors significantly affect their capacity for sustained engagement.

Through student feedback and ongoing dialogue, I identified that compressed delivery formats were contributing to cognitive overload. Students often reported difficulty in processing and retaining material, particularly where sessions involved dense theoretical content (K1;K3;V1).

Initial responses to this issue varied, some colleagues viewed it primarily as a content issue, suggesting that reducing coverage might be necessary. I approached this differently, drawing on cognitive load theory to argue that the issue was not the level of content, but how it was structured and sequenced (Sweller, 2011).

In response, I led programme level discussions and shared evidence informed approaches to restructuring teaching sessions. This supported colleagues in redistributing activities, incorporating reflective pauses and increasing scaffolding of key concepts. These adaptations were subsequently implemented across multiple weekend modules, contributing to improved student engagement and reduced perceptions of cognitive overload, as reflected in student feedback (Sweller, 2011;Mayer, 2009);(D3.1;D3.3).

This process challenged my earlier assumption that clear explanation alone was sufficient. I came to recognise that understanding needs to be actively constructed and revisited throughout teaching, rather than assumed. It also reinforced the importance of designing learning experiences that account for the realities of students' lives, particularly for those balancing study with significant external commitments.

Completing the Strategic Leadership and Management course in 2025 further developed my approach to influencing practice (A5;V3;V5);(Bolden, 2011). It strengthened my understanding of how change is facilitated through collaboration, shared responsibility and ongoing dialogue, rather than directive leadership.

This has shaped how I engage with colleagues, particularly in facilitating change through collaborative dialogue, acknowledging concerns and supporting incremental adoption of new approaches. Through this, I have influenced colleagues' willingness to adapt their practice, particularly where changes are grounded in shared evidence and aligned with programme priorities (D3.1;K3;V3;V5).

My previous managerial role in community based education continues to inform my approach (A2;A4;V1;V4). Working with individuals facing financial and social challenges, I developed structured learning interventions based on adult learning principles (Knowles, Holton and Swanson, 2015). This experience reinforced that barriers to learning often arise from complexity and lack of clarity, rather than lack of ability.

In my current teaching, this is reflected in scaffolded materials, applied examples and structured activities that support diverse learners (A1;A2;A3;A4;V1;V2). These approaches align with research emphasising the importance of belonging, clarity and support in student persistence, particularly for non traditional learners (Thomas, 2012;Advance HE, 2023).

My doctoral research on intergenerational practice further informs my teaching and supervision (A5;V3;V4). Through community based workshops, I have developed facilitation strategies that support inclusive participation and dialogue (Kaplan, Sánchez and Hoffman, 2017). These approaches have influenced how I design learning environments and how I guide colleagues in

doing the same, particularly in encouraging students to engage with diverse perspectives and apply their learning in socially relevant contexts (A2;K1;K2;V1;V3).

Presenting this research at conferences has strengthened my engagement with wider academic communities (A5;V3;V5). It has enabled me to situate my practice within broader discussions around inclusion and lifelong learning, while also informing conversations within my institution (Field, 2006;UNESCO, 2021). This exchange has refined my approach and strengthened how I discuss inclusion and lifelong learning with colleagues including local and wider developments.

Across these contexts, I have learned that resistance to change is often grounded in legitimate concerns whether related to workload, academic standards or student independence.

Addressing these concerns through evidence, dialogue and practical demonstration has been central to influencing practice (D3.1;K3;V5).

A consistent feature of my work has been reducing unnecessary complexity and increasing transparency, with the aim of supporting participation, progression and confidence among diverse learners (V1;V4;D3.2). This has involved recognising where barriers are inadvertently created through language, structure or assumptions, and working collaboratively to address them.

My professional development reflects a progression from focusing primarily on my own teaching towards contributing to wider enhancement across programmes (D3.1;D3.3). I identify patterns in student experience, interpret them through scholarship, and work with colleagues to implement changes that are both evidence informed and contextually appropriate.

My approach is grounded in modelling, dialogue and ongoing reflection, underpinned by a commitment to lifelong learning as both a social and educational principle (V3;V4;V5);(Field, 2006;UNESCO, 2021).

At this stage in my development, I increasingly see my role as helping to shape teaching practice collectively across programmes, rather than operating within the boundaries of individual modules. This involves not only responding to immediate challenges, but engaging more strategically with how inclusive and effective learning environments are developed and sustained across programmes.

SECTION 4: CASE STUDIES

Case Study 1

Title Case Study 1

Write your first case study here. References and citations are to be listed in a dedicated field below.

The “That’s Me” project emerged from a structural concern identified within postgraduate progression at the University of Wolverhampton. While undergraduate cohorts were increasingly diverse, this diversity was not reflected within postgraduate research pathways.

Through ongoing conversations with students across modules and within supervision meetings, a recurring pattern of uncertainty became evident. Students raised questions about how doctoral study operated, how funding was accessed, how supervisors were approached, and whether postgraduate research was “for people like me”. These were not isolated queries, but repeated across different cohorts, suggesting a broader issue in how postgraduate pathways were understood and communicated.

National evidence highlights persistent disparities in postgraduate progression among minoritised ethnic groups (Boliver, 2013; Universities UK and NUS, 2019). These disparities are not explained by academic attainment alone, but are shaped by access to informal knowledge, networks, mentoring and perceptions of belonging. Pierre Bourdieu (1986) conceptualises this as differential access to cultural capital the tacit knowledge required to

navigate institutional systems successfully. Recognising these patterns deepened my understanding of how learners experience higher education not simply through curriculum, but through systems, processes and implicit expectations (K3;V1).

Rather than interpreting these concerns as individual student anxieties, I understood them as indicators of structural barriers. This marked a shift in my approach. I moved from focusing primarily on individual support towards engaging with systemic issues within the programme. In practice, this involved initiating conversations with colleagues about transparency in postgraduate pathways, embedding progression discussions within teaching, and identifying opportunities to support students' understanding of doctoral study earlier in their academic journey. This approach aligns with research emphasising the importance of addressing structural inequalities rather than individualising student deficit (Burke, 2012; Boliver, 2013).

As co-creator of the "That's Me" project a collaborative initiative between the University of Wolverhampton and Birmingham City University, funded by UKRI and the Office for Students I led work aimed at widening participation, in postgraduate research among Global Majority students. The project focused on addressing barriers to doctoral study through targeted interventions, including inclusive application processes, enhanced induction and the development of peer support networks. Central to the project was a co creation model,

involving postgraduate researchers in shaping activities to ensure relevance and authenticity.

I led the conceptual framing of the surveys and workshops, ensuring alignment between participatory design and widening participation objectives. I also designed the session structure, balancing practical guidance with opportunities for critical reflection. Alongside this, I facilitated workshops, identified key discussion themes, synthesised findings and presented recommendations to institutional colleagues (A5;D3.3). My contribution extended beyond delivery; I shaped both the pedagogic design and strategic direction of the intervention.

The workshops were intentionally participatory, Alison Cook Sather (2014) argues that student partnership is most effective when participants are positioned as co creators rather than passive recipients. In practice, this meant creating space for participants to articulate barriers openly, rather than simply receiving information about doctoral processes (A4;V1).

To support this, I used structured facilitation techniques including small group discussions, guided prompts and anonymous reflective activities. These approaches enabled participants to share experiences without pressure, while ensuring that quieter voices were included. Participants were also invited to shape the direction of discussion, allowing sessions to

remain responsive rather than predetermined. This reflects principles of dialogue, reciprocity and shared ownership within co creation literature (Cook-Sather, 2014; Bovill, 2020).

Three interrelated elements shaped the intervention, First, structural transparency. We mapped doctoral funding routes, clarified application timelines and explained supervisory allocation processes step by step. This addressed informational barriers which research shows disproportionately affect students without access to academic networks (Boliver, 2013).

Second, representation, Doctoral researchers and academics from diverse backgrounds were present within the sessions. Representation was approached not as token inclusion, but as a meaningful signal of belonging and possibility (Arday, 2021).

Third, lifelong learning framing, Doctoral study was positioned not as an elite endpoint, but as part of a broader educational journey. Frank Coffield Field (2006) highlights how lifelong learning strengthens agency and participation. Many participants were mature learners returning to education after periods in employment or caring responsibilities. Framing doctoral progression within this broader narrative reduced perceived distance and supported engagement (V4;K2).

While the project was collaborative, I took responsibility for shaping both the structure and tone of the intervention. I ensured that sessions balanced practical clarity with reflective dialogue, avoiding an overemphasis on procedural detail. I also coordinated communication with colleagues so that the project was positioned as developmental and aspirational rather than remedial. This distinction was important, as widening participation initiatives can unintentionally reinforce deficit narratives if framed poorly (Arday, 2021).

In facilitating the workshops, I drew on experience working with diverse learner groups across higher education and community contexts. Sessions were structured so that information was interrogated rather than passively received. Participants were encouraged to question assumptions about doctoral study, challenge perceived barriers and reflect critically on their own positioning. This approach is grounded in dialogic learning (Freire, 1970;A4;K2) and reflects a deliberate pedagogic strategy rather than an ad hoc intervention (V3).

In early sessions, participants frequently described doctoral study as *“intimidating”* or *“unrealistic”*. One participant commented that they assumed *“you have to already know someone in academia to even apply”*. This revealed a perception of closed networks and limited access.

In response, I mapped formal application processes and clarified how funding panels operate independently of informal connections. By the end of the session, the same participant was asking about potential supervisors aligned with their research interests. This movement from perceived exclusion to active enquiry indicates increased confidence and a stronger sense of belonging (Thomas, 2012), demonstrating the inclusive impact of the intervention (D3.2). While this shift was evident for a number of participants, the response was not uniform across all groups. Some individuals continued to express hesitation about doctoral study, particularly where financial pressures, caring responsibilities or uncertainty about long term commitment remained significant factors. In these cases, the intervention appeared to strengthen awareness and understanding rather than immediately translating into application intent.

This distinction was important as It highlighted that while structural transparency and representation can reduce perceived barriers, they do not remove all constraints affecting postgraduate progression. The workshops were therefore most effective in influencing how participants understood doctoral pathways and their own potential within them, rather than acting as a direct mechanism for conversion into applications.

This reinforced my understanding that widening participation operates across stages shifting perception, building confidence and enabling informed decision making rather than

producing immediate outcomes, aligning with research linking belonging and clarity to student persistence (Thomas, 2012) (D3.2;V1).

Several participants subsequently requested one to one guidance on proposal development, while others expressed interest in future doctoral funding calls. These behavioural indicators demonstrate that the intervention moved beyond awareness towards meaningful engagement. While formal institutional data is still developing, triangulated indicators including increased student initiated enquiries, engagement in workshops and follow up supervision discussions suggest a shift in both awareness and aspiration (Wakeling and Kyriacou, 2010).

I synthesised qualitative insights into a structured report and presented these to programme teams and senior leadership (A5). I emphasised that underrepresentation should not be interpreted solely through attainment data, but through structural transparency, access to mentoring and perceptions of belonging (V3).

I led structured mentoring and reverse mentoring discussions with colleagues, creating targeted spaces for critical reflection on how postgraduate pathways were communicated within modules and supervision practices (A4;D3.1). Through these discussions, colleagues engaged with anonymised student narratives and critically evaluated their own practices. This resulted in colleagues adapting how they introduced postgraduate progression within

teaching, including earlier integration of funding discussions and more explicit guidance around supervisor engagement. These changes contributed to greater consistency in how postgraduate pathways were communicated across modules.

Reverse mentoring literature highlights its potential to surface implicit assumptions and support organisational learning through lived experience (Clutterbuck, 2014). Initially, some colleagues interpreted progression disparities primarily through attainment metrics. By grounding discussion in research on cultural capital and structural access (Bourdieu, 1986; Boliver, 2013), I reframed the issue towards institutional transparency and representation.

This shift extended beyond individual sessions into programme-level practice and became embedded within programme-level delivery. Colleagues began embedding earlier and more explicit signposting of postgraduate pathways within their modules, integrating discussions of funding routes, supervisory relationships and application processes into teaching. In addition, informal opportunities for engagement with potential supervisors were expanded across the programme. This reflected a clear shift in how postgraduate progression was positioned, moving from an implicit expectation to an embedded component of curriculum design (D3.1; D3.3).

I presented the “That’s Me” project at institutional conferences, sharing both findings and the participatory methodology underpinning it (A5;V3). This dissemination extended the influence of the project beyond the originating programme. Colleagues across institutional and cross institutional contexts engaged with the participatory methodology and began exploring similar approaches within their own teaching and widening participation initiatives. This demonstrates the transferability of the model and its influence on wider professional practice (D3.1;V4).

A defining feature of the project was its grounding in lifelong learning, for many participants, doctoral study represented a return to education rather than a continuation. By situating postgraduate research within a broader learning trajectory, we reduced perceived barriers and supported confidence.

This framing has influenced my ongoing teaching practice, I now integrate structured discussions of postgraduate progression earlier within undergraduate modules (A2;K2).

Rather than presenting doctoral study as a final stage option, it is positioned as a visible and attainable pathway throughout the programme (D3.2).

My approach to this work is informed by my background in community based education. In previous roles, I designed and delivered workshops supporting individuals navigating complex systems such as benefits and housing. These experiences reinforced that exclusion often arises from hidden complexity rather than lack of ability.

Translating this into higher education, I recognised that doctoral funding systems can appear similarly opaque. Strategies used in community contexts breaking down processes, validating lived experience and encouraging peer dialogue directly informed the design of the “That’s Me” intervention (K3;V4).

This continuity across contexts reflects a consistent approach to leadership: reducing structural barriers through clarity, dialogue and inclusive design (D3.2).

Perhaps the most significant impact has been both cultural and practical. Conversations within programme teams shifted from focusing primarily on increasing application numbers to critically examining how transparent and accessible existing processes were. This shift translated into tangible changes in practice, including earlier curriculum integration of progression pathways, increased visibility of mentoring opportunities and more consistent

communication of postgraduate routes across teaching teams. This demonstrates influence not only on professional thinking, but on the enacted practices of colleagues (D3.1;D3.2).

While structural inequalities in postgraduate progression extend beyond institutional control (Universities UK and NUS, 2019), the project contributed to improving transparency, increasing mentoring visibility and strengthening student confidence. Future work will involve developing longitudinal tracking of application and enrolment data to strengthen evaluation and inform further enhancement.

The contribution I made to the project was recognised through the Best Poster Award and the That's Me Co Creator Award. This recognition reflects the broader relevance of the work and reinforces the importance of embedding transparency and representation within postgraduate recruitment (A5;V3;D3.1).

The project has also shaped my professional identity, I now approach postgraduate progression not as optional guidance, but as an integral component of inclusive curriculum design (A2;K2). Leadership, in this context, involves sustaining dialogue, grounding decisions in scholarship and modelling inclusive practice over time. Moving forward, I intend to build on this work by further embedding postgraduate progression within curriculum design and contributing to institution wide approaches to widening participation in research pathways.

The “That’s Me” project demonstrates a sustained record of influence on colleagues’ practice and programme level enhancement. It evidences how my work has contributed to changes in how postgraduate progression is communicated, embedded and understood across teaching teams (D3.1). It integrates inclusive values and evidence informed approaches within both curriculum design and widening participation practice (D3.2), and demonstrates impact that extends significantly beyond my own teaching into programme level and institutional practice (D3.3). This work reflects an approach to academic leadership grounded in collaboration, dialogue and sustained influence on the practices of others.

Case Study 2

Title Case Study 2

Write your second case study here. References and citations are to be listed in a dedicated field below.

Weekend cohorts differ from weekday cohorts, many students attend after full working weeks, long shifts, caring responsibilities and extended travel. By the time they enter the classroom, they are often cognitively fatigued, and their confidence, concentration and energy are shaped by these realities. Teaching approaches that work effectively on a weekday morning do not automatically translate to a late Saturday afternoon. Where teaching design does not account for this context, cognitive overload and disengagement are more likely. Recognising this required me to draw on knowledge of how learners engage within specific contexts (K1) and to reconsider whether approaches used across weekend provision were appropriate for that environment (K2).

Research indicates that engagement is shaped by institutional structures, teaching practice and relational factors rather than individual motivation alone (Zepke and Leach, 2010).

Thomas (2012) highlights that a sense of belonging is central to persistence and success, particularly for students managing external pressures. Within weekend provision, clarity, pacing and equitable participation therefore become essential design considerations rather than optional enhancements. This prompted a shift in my thinking; rather than interpreting lower energy or quieter participation as a lack of engagement, I began to understand these

patterns as pedagogic and structural issues requiring a coordinated response

(K3;V1;V2;D3.2). It also strengthened my awareness that inclusive teaching is not simply about adapting delivery style, but about redesigning learning conditions in ways that respond to student context and educational inequality (V4).

As Weekend Coordinator, Lecturer & Research Supervisor at UWTSD, I have visibility across modules and across staff delivering weekend teaching. Over time, I observed recurring patterns of fluctuating engagement, uneven participation and assessment confusion that extended beyond individual sessions. This created a responsibility not only to refine my own teaching, but to contribute to programme level enhancement by identifying patterns, interpreting them and supporting colleagues to respond more coherently (A5;K3;D3.3). The issue therefore shifted from improving isolated sessions to improving the overall conditions for learning across weekend provision (D3.1).

To explore this further, I gathered anonymous feedback from 85 Health and Social Care students and analysed responses thematically. This was necessary to support wider discussion with colleagues, rather than relying on anecdotal impressions. Evaluating practice through structured inquiry reflects critical reflection and evidence informed enhancement (K3;K4;V3), and enabled me to distinguish between isolated concerns and recurring issues that required redesign.

Student voice literature emphasises that feedback strengthens engagement when learners can see how their views influence change (Cook-Sather, 2014;Office for Students, 2025). After analysing responses, I summarised key themes and shared them transparently with the cohort, explaining which elements could be adjusted immediately and which remained constrained by validation requirements. This was important in demonstrating that feedback was being used meaningfully rather than collected superficially. Informal comments such as *“it feels like we’re being listened to”* and *“it’s easier to follow now because you break it up more”* suggested improved clarity and trust in the learning process (V1;V2;A4). By closing the feedback loop, I strengthened students’ sense of belonging and agency. Thomas (2012) highlights that belonging is reinforced when institutional responsiveness is visible. This stage therefore influenced not only session design, but also the relational culture of weekend provision (D3.2;D3.3).

Sharing these findings with colleagues prompted programme level reflection on how teaching was experienced across modules, supporting a more consistent and responsive programme level approach (D3.1;V3). This was important, as the issues identified were not limited to my own teaching but reflected wider patterns within weekend delivery that required a collective response.

While overall feedback was positive, the developmental themes were clear. Students described sessions as “*overwhelming*” and “*too much information at once*”, and many requested more opportunities for interaction. I interpreted these comments as indicators of learning design rather than personal criticism. Cognitive load theory explains that excessive information presentation can impair processing and retention, particularly where students are already cognitively fatigued (Sweller, 2011) (K1;K2;V3).

Research on active learning demonstrates improved performance when participation is structured purposefully (Freeman et al., 2014), while engagement increases when interaction is deliberately embedded (Zepke and Leach, 2010). Based on this, I concluded that the issue was not a lack of willingness to engage, but that understanding was not being made sufficiently visible during teaching.

Three interrelated issues emerged, first, information density and pacing risked cognitive overload. Second, participation patterns were uneven and often dominated by more confident voices. Third, misunderstandings frequently became visible only at the point of assessment submission, when opportunities for timely correction were limited.

Recognising these as structural issues enabled me to raise them within programme level discussions, rather than treating them as isolated classroom concerns (K3;D3.1). This

positioned the response as a shared teaching and learning issue affecting multiple weekend cohorts (D3.3).

Black and Wiliam (2009) define formative assessment as the use of evidence about learning to adapt teaching in real time. Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006) argue that feedback strengthens learning when it clarifies standards and enables students to close gaps. In response, I embedded structured formative checkpoints within sessions using Vevox as a student response system. The decision was pedagogical rather than technological.

Audience response systems can increase participation when integrated purposefully (Kay and LeSage, 2009;Hunsu, Adesope and Bayly, 2016), but poorly integrated use can reduce clarity (Caldwell, 2007). The innovation therefore lay not in the platform itself, but in aligning formative checkpoints with learning outcomes and using them to make understanding visible during teaching (A1;A2;A3;K2;K4;V3).

To ensure inclusive participation, I kept responses low stakes, allowed paired responses and provided verbal alternatives, recognising that digital access and confidence cannot be assumed (Selwyn, 2019;Jisc, 2024);(V1;V2;V4). This reflected an understanding that inclusive pedagogy requires attention not only to design effectiveness, but also to whether design choices introduce new barriers.

Sessions were restructured into predictable cycles, explain, apply, check and clarify. After introducing a concept, I incorporated short application tasks requiring reasoning rather than recall. Where responses indicated misunderstanding, I paused and clarified before progressing (A2;A3;K1;K2). For example, when teaching the distinction between descriptive and analytical writing, I presented short excerpts and asked students to identify which demonstrated analysis. Where responses were divided, I modelled analytical reasoning and revisited the distinction. This strengthened assessment literacy before submission. Carless and Boud (2018) argue that feedback literacy develops when students actively interpret standards. Embedding this within teaching enabled students to practise evaluative judgement rather than relying solely on post submission feedback (A3;K3;V3).

Content was also segmented with deliberate pauses to support processing and reduce cognitive load (Sweller, 2011;Gosling, 2009). Academic standards remained unchanged, but pacing became more manageable. Students who rarely contributed began engaging through anonymous checkpoints, and some later contributed verbally. While causation cannot be definitively established, this pattern aligns with research linking belonging and psychological safety to engagement (Thomas, 2012) and demonstrates inclusive practice in action (D3.2).

Impact was evaluated through multiple indicators (K4;V3), a previously consistent pattern of high volumes of clarification questions and emails before assignment deadlines reduced

following implementation, suggesting that misunderstandings were being identified earlier.

Moderation discussions also indicated improved alignment between assessment criteria and student work. While this does not constitute a controlled quantitative evaluation, the convergence of feedback, behaviour and assessment dialogue provides a credible basis for judging that the redesign improved clarity and reduced avoidable confusion (K3;K4;V3). The significance lies not only in reduced queries, but in the ability to focus teaching more consistently on conceptual development.

Colleagues who adopted similar approaches within their own modules and teaching contexts reported comparable outcomes. One described it as “catching confusion earlier instead of discovering it at marking.” This indicated that the principle was transferable beyond my own teaching (D3.1;K5). To support this, I shared rationale, examples and adaptable templates, enabling colleagues to modify the approach within their own contexts rather than replicate it mechanically. This shifted the work from individual redesign towards development of others’ practice and a more consistent programme level approach (K5;D3.3).

After embedding the approach across a semester, I synthesised the redesign process, student feedback, scholarly rationale and impact indicators into a research informed poster, which I presented at a learning and teaching conference (A5;V3). This required positioning the work within broader debates around condensed delivery models, widening participation

and inclusive design. Discussions with colleagues from other institutions revealed similar tensions between content coverage and cognitive sustainability. Several later contacted me to explore adaptation within their own contexts. This extended the influence of the work beyond my institution (D3.1) and reinforced its credibility internally.

Laurillard (2012) argues that sustainable pedagogic innovation depends on transferable design principles. By framing the approach around formative visibility and cognitive load, rather than a specific tool, I ensured adaptability across contexts. These discussions also prompted reflection on longer term evaluation and potential limitations, including over reliance on technology. This exchange reflects active engagement with wider professional communities (V3;V4;A5).

Over time, discussions with colleagues shifted from technology use towards how understanding is made visible during teaching. By focusing on design rather than platform, resistance reduced. Some colleagues initially expressed concerns about workload and reliability. Bennett et al. (2017) note that perceived risk influences adoption. I responded by offering practical demonstration, shared materials and opportunities for contextual adaptation rather than directive instruction. Gradually, colleagues trialled structured checkpoints in their own teaching, demonstrating sustained influence on practice (D3.1;K5).

During curriculum review meetings, I advocated for planned formative clarification within modules, particularly in weekend provision. Rather than relying solely on written briefs, modules increasingly incorporated opportunities for students to practise applying criteria during sessions. This represents influence extending beyond my own teaching into programme level design (D3.3;A5), and demonstrates engagement with institutional processes (K5).

This work demonstrates sustained influence on colleagues' practice (D3.1), inclusive integration of teaching approaches (D3.2), and contribution to programme level enhancement (D3.3). It reflects a shift from focusing primarily on content delivery towards prioritising visibility of learning. Not all attempts were immediately effective. In one early session, I introduced too many checkpoints, which disrupted flow. I adjusted this by limiting checkpoints to key transition points. This reinforced that formative visibility must be proportionate and integrated rather than applied mechanically (Black and Wiliam, 2009).

A small number of colleagues also remained cautious about sustained digital use. Rather than viewing this as resistance, I recognised it as concern about workload and reliability (Bennett et al., 2017). Continued dialogue and modelling proved more effective than persuasion, reflecting the relational nature of influence within academic practice (Bolden, 2011;D3.1).

Leadership in this context has involved identifying structural patterns through evidence, interpreting them through scholarship, implementing proportionate redesign and enabling colleagues through sustained dialogue. The most significant outcome has not been the use of a particular tool, but the embedding of a shared principle: learning should be made visible early and continuously. This principle now informs practice beyond my own teaching and contributes to a more coherent and inclusive approach to weekend provision across multiple cohorts (A5;V3;D3.1;D3.3).

SECTION 5: References and Citations

Write any references or citations used in your application here:

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Your application (including the two Supporting Statements from your referees) is submitted first to the Academic Office **via the appropriate submission link on Moodle (Advance HE Fellowship module)**.

SECTION 6: Referees

Your application must be accompanied by **two references** from persons who are in a position to comment on your teaching and learning practices and achievements.

The function of your Referees is to provide an informed peer review of your eligibility for Senior Fellow, using their knowledge of your work and the context in which you teach and/or support learning. Referees are expected to **verify and endorse your application** by commenting directly on the content of your application and to make additional, relevant comments, as they wish.

Referees should be experienced staff and be able to comment knowledgeably, and from first-hand experience, on your current role and any other relevant activities recently undertaken. **At least one of your Referees should either be a Fellow, Senior Fellow or Principal Fellow of Advance HE**, or an appropriate experienced member of staff working for a UK Higher Education Institution (HEI). All Referees need to be familiar with PSF 2023.

Referees should be provided with a copy of the Guidance Notes for Referees – please speak to your mentor regarding this document.

First Referee:	
Name	Martin Svejda
Job Title	Module Lead Manager
Fellowship Status	Fellow
Institution/Institute/Centre/Unit	IICL
Email address	m.svejda@uwtsd.ac.uk
In what capacity can this individual comment on your professional practice?	
Module Lead Manager	

Second Referee:	
Name	Professor & Dr Opinderjit Tahar MBE
Job Title	Associate Dean for Research and Knowledge Exchange Professor of Faith and Public Engagement
Fellowship Status	Professor / MBE
Institution/Institute/Centre/Unit	Faculty of Education, Health and Wellbeing
Email address	otakhar@gmail.com Click or tap here to enter text.
In what capacity can this individual comment on your professional practice?	
Research Supervisor / Manager Associate Dean for Research and Knowledge Exchange Professor of Faith and Public Engagement	

SECTION 7: Declaration

Please sign and date in the box below to confirm that the application you are submitting is your own work.

Signature	<i>Z. Ahmed</i>
Date	11.04.2026

GDPR on data sharing with ADVANCE HE

Following the implementation of GDPR you should be aware that following successful recognition at UWTSD, personal data including your name and email address will be supplied to Advance HE. This is in order to trigger your fellowship registration and certificate being recorded on their MyAdvanceHE database. <https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/my-academy-manage-your-higher-education-academy-experience> Advance HE will make use of this data in the course of providing their Accreditation Services to UWTSD, and potentially in any reviews they might carry out of our accredited provision. By submitting your coursework and appendices you are confirming you agree to this data sharing.