



Senior Fellowship

Supporting Statement Template

Your Name	Professor Opinderjit Kaur Takhar MBE
Applicant Name	Zakiyyah Ahmed
Your Institution/organisation/other	RoundGlass Foundation
Your current role	Head of Global Punjab Project
Email address	otakhar@gmail.com
Your Fellowship Status (if appropriate)	FHEA
Relationship to Applicant	Previous PhD Director of Studies for Applicant Previous Associate Dean for Research and Knowledge Exchange
How long have you worked with the applicant (insert dates)	5 Years



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: 14 April 2026



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.

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Zakiyyah Ahmed

This reference is in support of Zakiyyah Ahmed's application for Senior Fellow Status with the Higher Education Academy. Zakiyyah Ahmed is currently a PhD researcher and a Lecturer in the Faculty of Education, Health and Wellbeing at the University of Wolverhampton. I was Zakiyyah Ahmed's PhD Director of Studies prior to my leaving the University a few weeks ago, and had acted in this capacity for the last five years. In this role, I guided and supported Zakiyyah Ahmed's research, as well as the documentation provided for the Annual Performance Reviews for her Doctoral Work.



I am happy to confirm that Zakiyyah Ahmed has been a highly proactive student, as well as energetic Lecturer. She has been very successful in converting her research specialism to undergraduate study, specifically in her modules that she teaches in Faculty. She has presented at numerous conferences and events, often being personally invited to speak. This shows the strength of both her work, as well as the impact she is making through her Doctoral Studies. Zakiyyah Ahmed is successful in producing a scholarly environment that is both supportive and challenging for her students.

I should also like to note the activities Zakiyyah Ahmed has undertaken to further disseminate of her research expertise. She has done so through academic research and contributions to individual and collaborative pedagogic projects.

Also, she has worked very closely with local groups to bring the University into fertile contact with the local community in what I consider to be an example of good practice generally for the HE sector, but particularly so for a University that is committed both to serving the region and to widening participation under its Civic Mission.

Zakiyyah has made a significant contribution to the “That’s Me” project, a collaborative initiative focused on widening participation in postgraduate research. I was one of the leads on this project, which gained funding from the Office of Students (OfS). Through her role in shaping and facilitating surveys and workshops, she has actively contributed to developing more transparent and inclusive approaches to postgraduate progression, which again is evidenced through her involvement as a researcher in the That’s Me project.



Drawing on student insights and research informed practice, she has supported colleagues in recognising structural barriers to progression and in adapting how doctoral pathways are communicated within teaching and supervision.

This work has contributed to programme discussions and has informed changes in how postgraduate opportunities are introduced and discussed with students, including earlier and more inclusive conversations around research pathways. As a result, colleagues have engaged more with issues of access, representation and transparency, demonstrating a shift in both professional thinking and practice beyond Zakiyyah's own teaching.

Overall, Zakiyyah's practice demonstrates influence on approaches to teaching and student progression, underpinned by collaborative and evidence informed methods. Her work extends beyond direct teaching and contributes to enhancing learning and teaching within the wider academic context.

Zakiyyah's work in the varied dimensions demanded of the modern academic has been a model of professional practice and I strongly commend her application to you.

Regards

Professor Opinderjit Kaur Takhar MBE, FHEA



--