



Senior Fellowship

Supporting Statement Template

Your Name	Alison Harding
Institution/organisation/other	University of Wales Trinity Saint David
Job Title	Executive Head of Library and Learning Resources
Email address	a.harding@uwtsd.ac.uk
Your Fellowship Status (if appropriate)	None, but working towards PFHEA
Relationship to Applicant	Line Manager
How long have you worked with the applicant (insert dates)	August 2011 – 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.  Date: 26th July, 2024.

Supporting Statement

Please provide your statement to support the applicant's submission for Senior 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.

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

I have worked with Sarah for over 10 years, and was responsible for her recruitment to her first role within the University in 2011. We have both had several roles over this period but I have been her line manager through all. It has been a privilege to witness her growth and development as an information professional, manager and leader over the last 13 years, and I have learnt hugely from our many collaborations and conversations.

In her current role as Head of Academic Services we have collaborated closely to set the tone and approach for how the LLR engages with its many complex internal and external relationships. In her many cross-departmental projects she has been hugely influential in shifting the perceptions of the library and its staff within the University, and this is by design. Sarah has developed into a creative strategic thinker, and has led the development of a number of services which have impacted positively on both the staff and student experience. In addition, many of these services are recognized externally as highly innovative and sector leading.

A number of years ago she was responsible for the development of the LLRs cohesive and holistic document delivery scheme, and in many ways the service she developed is still far beyond what many peer libraries have developed. This project led into the early work of the WHELF+ Resource Sharing [inter lending scheme](#), which now operates across Wales and beyond in supplying learning resources via our shared library management system (LMS). During this time Sarah also started work on implementing a systematic approach to collecting the data and analytics of the services that sat within her team, utilizing our LMS initially to support this. The collaboration between Sarah and John Dalling, our Head of Collections, has meant that the LLRs data and analytics work is seen as good and innovative practice both internally and externally. We not only collect our data with a consistent approach but are able to visualize the story this data tells us about our services across the LLRs teams. This is in no small part to Sarah's talent for strategic and visionary service planning,

Soon after the 2016 LLR restructure that created Sarah's role, she was able to create a meaningful marketing function within her area; this had been a key component for her vision for the service since her appointment. This element has grown over the last few years, and the impact can be evidenced by mapping the increased use of the LLRs resources and skills offer to various campaigns and related marketing activities. The LLRs NSS score for 2024 of 88.21 is the highest since the university merger of 2013, and I have no doubt this is primarily due to the work led by Sarah in developing a strategic marketing and communications approach for the service.

The recent development of the LLRs online InfoSkills curriculum will be hugely impactful across the university. The feedback received already has been excellent, and this project was recently nominated for a university NEXUS Learning and



Teaching Award. As a university with a hugely complex student body, located across a number of disparate locations, then the development of a skills curriculum to support the university's teaching, learning and research has been key in ensuring an equitable student and staff experience. This approach makes best use of our people resources, as well as supports the learning patterns and needs of our students. Alongside this project has been the establishment of a Programme Manager timeline, which looks to identify key points in the university calendar where our academic colleagues need to engage with the LLR for specific services or engagement activities. This work was in close collaboration with the university's Academic Office to ensure the approach aligns with other elements of programme manager development. This is key to Sarah's strategic approach to her practice, working to align and embed our services where most appropriate and where they are most meaningful for our students, staff and researchers. Sarah is not reactionary, all work is planned, considered and measured in the context of the core mission of the university.

The implementation of our reading list solution, Leganto, was in many ways the starting point for many of these pieces of work. As part of the conversations she and I had around the establishment of her role this was seen as a key element of the roadmap in developing a service fit for purpose. The project work around our Online Resource Lists was led by Sarah, and this was a strategic decision as she was keen for this to be seen as a teaching and learning tool, rather than a systems implementation. In many other Institutions it was, and is, seen as purely an infrastructure activity, and this has not necessarily resulted in the impactful outcomes that we have seen at UWTSD. The continued growth and development of this service reflects Sarah's collaborative approach to ensure a model that is fit for purpose. The implementation of Leganto has helped support hugely the evidence-based practice culture she has led and developed within her team. In leading a team with a wide range of professional backgrounds and skills groups she has worked to create a culture of empowerment and trust, and in doing so has created an environment where colleagues are encouraged to take risks and learn in a place of safety. Her positive impact on her team cannot be overstated; both in terms of the quality of work produced but in also how the work happens.

During the pandemic the emphasis on student and staff digital skills became a sector wide conversation. Within UWTSD this area of work was seen to have its natural home with the LLR. This I would suggest is primarily due to Sarah's work in leading a cohesive approach to digital skills development for the university, alongside the success of the Online Resource List project. Even during this traumatic time Sarah led the development of a sector-leading digital skills offer for the Institution. She has spoken at several conferences on this work, which has in turn informed the development of provision in other institutions. She is now sharing her knowledge and experience as a member of the new [SCONUL](#) Organizational Development Strategy Group.

Sarah's vision is very much from the user perspective. How can we make our services easier to engage with, but without diluting the content or learning opportunities; these are key elements of her reflections and thought processes. Sarah's core belief is in the power of education for all. She is driven by a fundamental desire to inform both the learning journey of our students and their wider life skills development. For Sarah, her learning, that of her team, and those who access our services are linked as part of her core value of learning for all.



In supporting Sarah's Senior Fellowship application I am reflecting on not only the work she has shaped and crafted, but also how courageously she has led it. She is a naturally reflective person and so has engaged in many leadership development activities, and all have influenced her practice significantly. Her openness to learn and grow is her key leadership skill; she continues to be a hugely positive role model for her team and the wider service, including myself and fellow members of the LLRs leadership group.