



Using the AHEP Professional Framework

A Practical Guide to Success





Contents

About this guide	4
AHEP Professional Framework	6
Eight Professional Commitments	8
What the Framework adds	9
Working with the Framework	10
Exploring the Member Levels	10
Exploring the Framework	12
Using the Framework: For your own personal and professional development	20
Activities and outcomes	20
Practical exercises to engage with the Framework	21
Hints and tips	23
Using the Framework with colleagues and with teams	24
Activities and Outcomes	24
Practical Exercise to Engage Your Team	25
Hints and tips for using the Framework to enhance team performance	26
Using the Framework at institutional level	28
Issues to consider	28
Activities and Outcomes	29
Hints and tips for successful implementation at institutional level	30
Resources	31
A final word	32
Appendix 1	33
Appendix 2	34

About this guide

The purpose of this guide is to provide sound, practical advice about how you can get the best from AHEP's Professional Framework, whatever your role within higher education (HE).

The focus is therefore on practical solutions rather than on theories and models. You may be a HE professional seeking tips and pointers about how you can use the Framework, or you may be responsible for a team of HE professionals looking for new ways to develop your services for the benefit of you, your colleagues, your stakeholders and your institutions alike.

You may be reading this guide as a member of a senior team or have human resources (HR), organisational development (OD) or learning and development (L&D) remit and be seeking practical advice on how your institution could benefit from the Framework.

We start by explaining the Framework, before we go on to demonstrate how it can be used in the workplace. Using examples, we demonstrate how the Framework can be used by the individual, as part of a team or incorporated into institutional strategy.



AHEP Professional Framework

Our Professional Framework places your career at the heart of your AHEP membership. It is a reflective tool to help you assess your strengths and areas for improvement, enabling you take control of your professional development. Using the Framework to support your reflective practice will enable you to grow, both personally and professionally and deliver your organisation's strategic objectives.

The Framework comprises eight professional commitments that characterise you as a higher education professional, highlighting core behaviours, knowledge and skills. Each statement is underpinned by a specific attribute, but all commitments and attributes are ultimately interrelated.

Each commitment is underpinned by AHEP's values. These are the values of AHEP and we expect our members to wholeheartedly embrace these values:

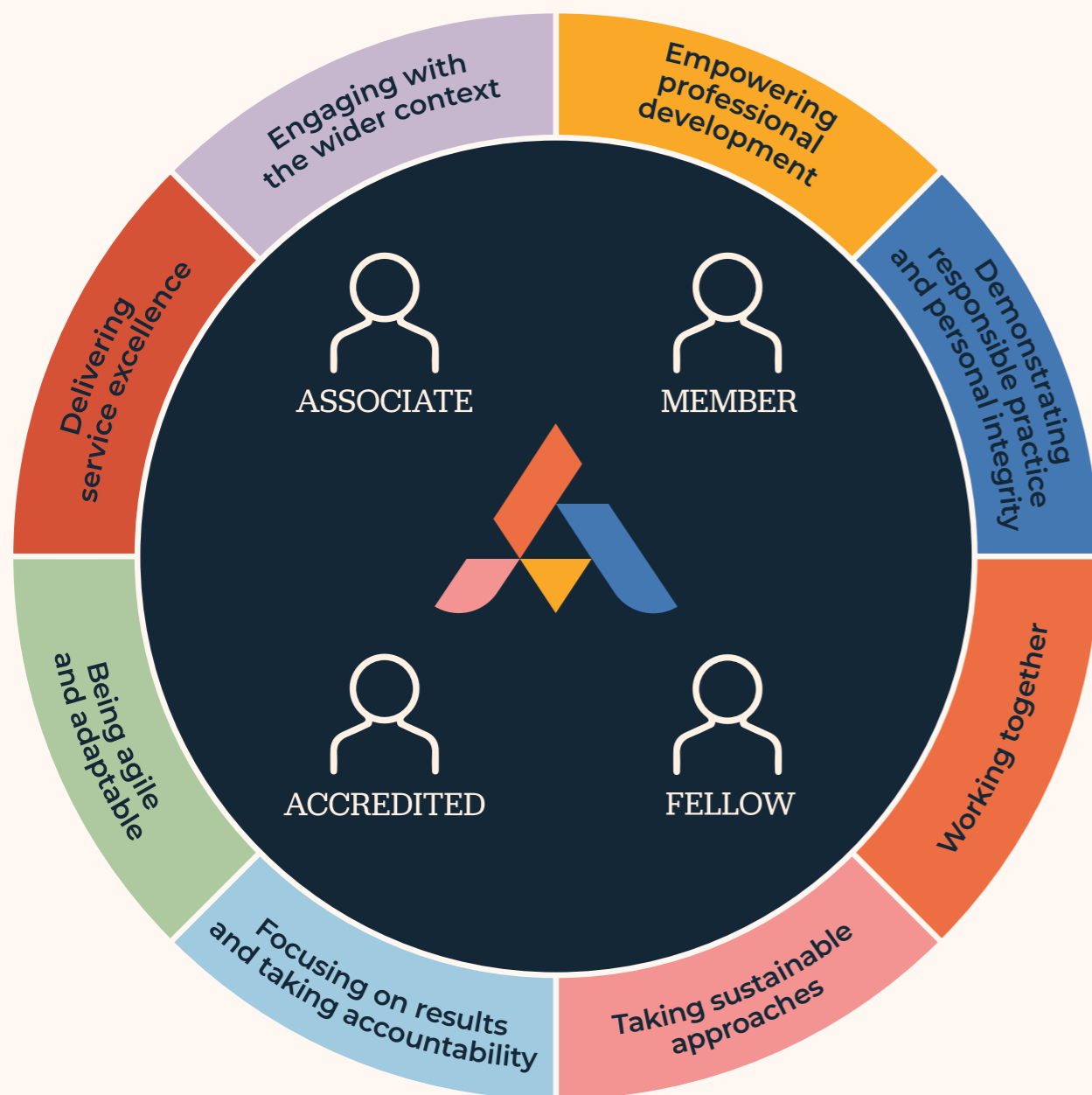


Figure 1: AHEP Professional Framework



Credible

We take pride in being professional in everything we do. By modelling the commitments outlined in the Professional Framework, we foster credibility for ourselves and the HE community.



Inclusive

We embrace diversity in all its forms and there is an active role available for everyone. Through proactive efforts to create an environment of respect, equity, and accessibility, we contribute to a truly inclusive higher education community.



Personable

We actively engage with others to foster positive relationships throughout our HE community to create an inviting and supportive environment where everyone's voices are heard and valued.



Collaborative

We actively seek opportunities to connect with others, sharing diverse insights and experiences to foster growth and jointly pursue solutions.

8 Professional Commitments



As a higher education professional, I am committed to:

1. Empowering Professional Development

Investing in development to enhance professional skills, knowledge and behaviours underpinned by reflective practice. Empowering self and others to maximise professional potential. Developing personal responsibility, greater self-awareness, and understanding how to bring the best out of self and others. This commitment to empowering professional development acknowledges that **Leadership** is not tied to a specific position or title but exists regardless of your level within the organisation, displaying a range of behaviours and attitudes to impact and achieve organisational goals positively.

2. Demonstrating Responsible Practice and Personal Integrity:

Upholding high ethical standards, building positive relationships and trust, and demonstrating personal integrity and professionalism in all interactions and decisions. To consistently apply values and principles in decision-making and actions. At the core of responsible practice and personal integrity is **Equity, Diversity and Inclusion**, advocating inclusivity and fostering fairness and respect for all.

3. Working Together:

Collaborating to achieve positive results whilst recognising and valuing individual contributions. Being aware of how your behaviour influences others and working in a way that builds trust and mutual respect. Embraced within the commitment to working together are robust **Communication** skills to promote effective collaboration and ensure clarity in interactions.

4. Taking Sustainable Approaches:

Ensuring a balance between economic, environmental and social sustainability. Adopting sustainable practices to safeguard the long-term well-being of individuals, the organisation and the environment. Identifying and making the most productive use of resources, including people, time, information, networks, budgets and digital tools. Pivotal to the commitment to taking sustainable approaches is advancing **Digital Capability**, becoming expert in familiar tools and embracing relevant new technologies and tools as they emerge.

5. Focusing on Results and Taking Accountability:

Consistently working towards agreed objectives and success criteria and taking ownership of outcomes. Using evidence to inform your approach. Embedded within the commitment to results focus and accountability is **Information Governance**, handling and analysing data responsibly to ensure accuracy and compliance.

6. Being Agile and Adaptable:

Actively seeking new approaches and adapting strategies and processes, learning from experience to respond effectively to changing circumstances. Supporting your own resilience and well-being and that of others to maintain flexibility. Central to the commitment to agility and adaptability is **Embracing and Driving Change**, adopting a positive outlook and acknowledging that change is continual.

7. Delivering Service Excellence:

Ensuring a high-quality, professional service to all stakeholders, including students, academic and professional colleagues, and external partners. Adopting an ethos of continuous improvement through reflective practice, seeking feedback and creative thinking. Fundamental to service excellence is understanding **Stakeholder Perspectives** to deliver experiences, services and environments that are person-centred.

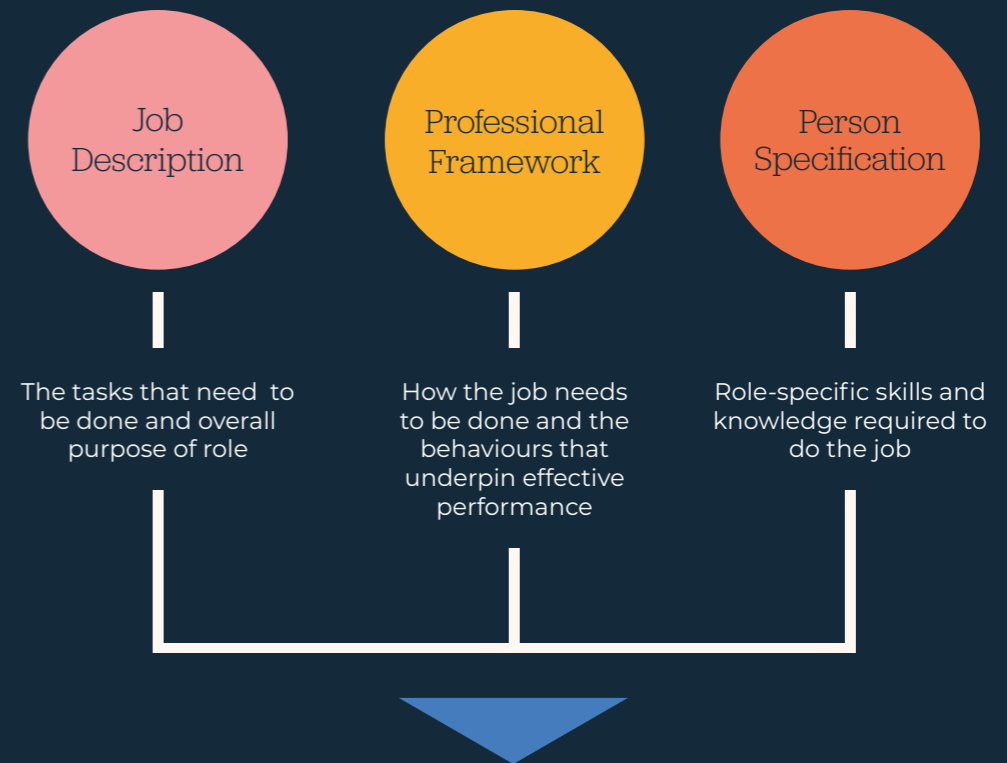
8. Engaging with the Wider Context:

Enhancing your contribution to the organisation through understanding the wider organisation and sector and showing commitment to organisational values. Keeping up-to-date with current issues and trends. **Sharing Best Practice** is encompassed within the commitment to engaging with the wider context for the benefit of others, the organisation and the sector.

The statements of professional commitment are an evolution of the nine professional behaviours of the AUA CPD Framework, and were developed through research, benchmarking and consultation questionnaires, workshops and focus groups. As before, these eight professional commitments are universal across all roles, although some will be more important in certain job families than others.

What the Framework adds:

The Framework provides additional information about a role that complements and enhances standard information within organisations, such as a job description and person specification. As a result, individuals, teams and institutions have a clearer idea of what is required of professional services staff in order to meet the organisation's strategic objectives.



Comprehensive picture of the expectations of effective performance in the role

Figure 2: How the Framework fits with existing information about a role

Working with the Framework

The AHEP Professional Framework aligns with our four levels of membership, describing four distinct tiers of influence and impact whilst outlining the behaviours, knowledge and skills to make a positive and meaningful contribution at each stage. This breakdown provides valuable insights to help you achieve your fullest potential, whether advancing through the levels or excelling within a particular tier. These levels are universally applicable to all higher education professionals, irrespective of their specific role, expertise, AHEP membership status, or employment type (employed or self-employed) and complements existing CPD requirements for specialist roles.

The membership levels reflect the way in which your professional role transforms over time into a more strategic endeavour, with broadening influence and impact on others.

Exploring the Member Levels

Browse the descriptors for each member level below to identify the member level that best describes where you are in your career.

If you feel that you broadly align with more than one level, delve deeper into the Framework to establish which level corresponds to where you are now. Then, use the examples provided at that level to reflect on your strengths and identify areas for improvement.



- You are likely to have just started out in your career as an HE professional, typically with less than two years' experience.
- You primarily deliver short term outcomes, directly addressing the needs of the team and stakeholders.
- You gather information to better understand your work and the overall functioning of your institution.
- You meet the needs of your team and stakeholders, providing a professional service.
- You recognise the importance of professional development and seek out opportunities to improve.



- You are likely to have a number of years' experience in the HE sector and may have line management / supervisory responsibilities.
- Your work typically delivers short to medium-term benefits, in some cases extending to those outside of your immediate area of work.
- You analyse information from diverse sources to apply relevant insights to your work, leading to well-informed decisions and actions.
- You work with and influence colleagues in your area (both professional and academic) as well as stakeholders.
- You are committed to your professional development, understanding, and working to address your development needs.



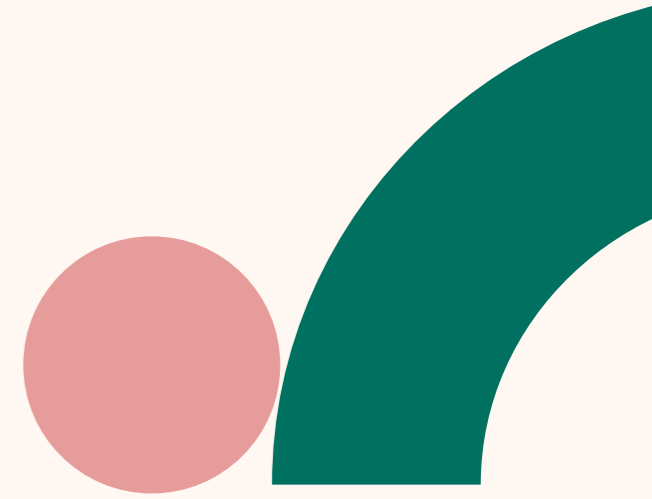
- You are likely to be working in a role with a balance of strategic and operational elements, and have management or supervisory responsibilities.
- Your work delivers medium to long-term value for stakeholders across the institution.
- You synthesise and evaluate information from a wide range of sources to solve problems and make evidence-based, robust decisions and actions.
- You work with and influence a diverse range of individuals across your institution.
- You are actively committed to your professional development, undertaking a range of activities to enhance your practice and support the development of others.



- You are likely to be working at a predominantly strategic level within your institution or have significant expertise in a specific area.
- Your work leads to the achievement of long-term outcomes for the institution or contributes to sector developments.
- You help shape institutional approaches and ensure decisions are made fairly and inclusively, navigating complexity based on evidence and critical analysis.
- You influence a diverse range of individuals, both within and outside the institution.
- You model a commitment to and engagement with ongoing professional development and actively support that of others in a range of ways.

Exploring the Framework

The professional commitments within the Framework will be required in all job roles, though some may be more important in some jobs than others. The table below provides exemplars for each professional commitment mapped against each membership level. The exemplar commitments demonstrate increasing levels of impact and influence through the member levels. Explore the Framework to gain a comprehensive picture of the behaviour, knowledge and skill areas aligned to each member level. Then you can reflect on your areas of strength and assess your areas for development.



1.

Empowering Professional Development; encompassing Leadership



Associate	Member	Accredited Member	Fellow
I recognise my own professional goals and aspirations through self-reflection, including the skills, knowledge and behaviours I want to develop.	I reflect on my actions and actively seek feedback on my professional practice from supervisors, colleagues, and mentors.	I evaluate the impact my professional development has had on others locally.	I role model my professional development to impact and influence others and foster a learning culture.
I identify and engage with learning opportunities that align to my goals and invest in my professional development	I keep my professional knowledge and skills current and plan my development.	I enable my own and others' continuous professional development bringing out the best in myself and others.	I give back to my professional community by sharing my expertise to develop others and maximise their professional potential.
I understand my capabilities, seek to grow and develop as a professional, by engaging positively with team members and stakeholders to achieve organisational goals.	I demonstrate respect in all aspects of my role and encourage others to work to high standards of professionalism.	I establish standards for those around me and influence others to develop their professional behaviours, knowledge, and skills	I create an environment where those around me can develop professionally, providing support, feedback, and coaching.

2.

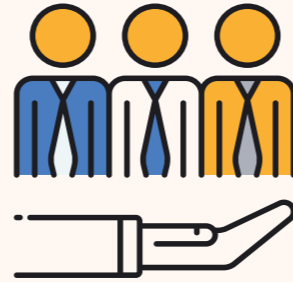
Demonstrating Responsible Practice and Personal Integrity; encompassing Equity, Diversity and Inclusion



Associate	Member	Accredited Member	Fellow
I demonstrate honesty and integrity in dealing with others, upholding high ethical standards and demonstrating personal integrity and professionalism in all interactions.	I encourage and consider diverse views and opinions and seek to apply them in my area of work.	I analyse numerous perspectives to make decisions and find the most appropriate solutions for all.	I influence others to reflect on the ethical impact of their decision making and actions.
I recognise and act within relevant legislation and professional and organisational values and I understand how to raise concerns about behaviours that do not meet them.	I demonstrate consistency in my decisions and actions and can challenge decisions and actions that are inconsistent with professional and organisational values.	I promote professional principles and values and invite and enable challenge to foster a culture of responsible practice.	I champion professional principles and values to advocate for institutional and sector change and continuous improvement.
I embrace diversity and incorporate equity and inclusion into my professional approach.	I advocate inclusivity and foster fairness and respect for all and seek to be an effective ally.	I actively integrate equity and inclusion approaches and encourage others to do the same, challenging individual and institutional bias.	I inculcate a people-first culture with equity, diversity, and inclusion approaches at its core.

3.

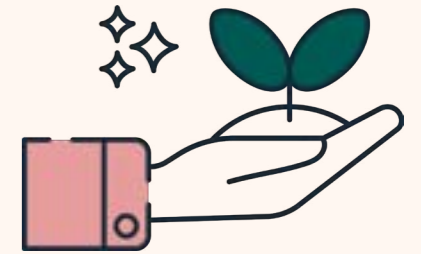
Working Together; encompassing Communication



Associate	Member	Accredited Member	Fellow
I contribute fully to the success of my team and identify how my role relates to other roles and the contributions different individuals bring.	I recognise and respect the roles, responsibilities, interests and concerns of colleagues and stakeholders and surface issues early so they can be addressed.	I enable the development of autonomy in others by taking a coaching approach.	I create mechanisms to support a culture of effective collaboration and consultation to meet organisational goals.
I seek to understand my own behaviours and impact on others.	I develop trust within and outside of my immediate team, building professional relationships by sharing information and keeping others informed.	I work across organisational boundaries to develop relationships with other teams to discourage siloed working.	I exemplify trust and collaborative working, modelling transparency across all interactions.
I demonstrate effective interpersonal and written communication using a variety of media.	I present complex information clearly to specialist and general audiences.	I share information across the institution to enable others to collaborate effectively.	I evaluate the impact of communications on individuals, the organisation, and the profession.

4.

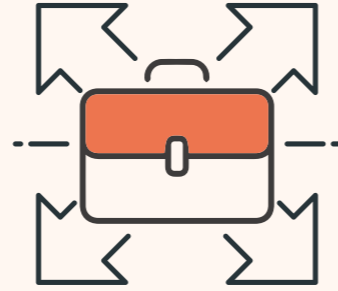
Taking Sustainable Approaches; encompassing Digital Capability



Associate	Member	Accredited Member	Fellow
I recognise sustainability includes environmental, financial and social aspects.	I appreciate how environmental, financial and social sustainability applies to my role.	I encourage colleagues and stakeholders to develop their awareness of the interplay between environmental, financial, and social sustainability.	I influence sustainable economic models that balance long-term financial stability, environmental sustainability and social well-being.
I practice energy efficiency, reducing waste and recycling and optimise resource usage, including time and cost effectiveness	I implement ecofriendly initiatives and sustainable solutions in projects and identify the longer-term financial benefits of sustainable practices.	I contribute to the development of sustainable operating plans that balance financial stability and responsible practices.	I champion initiatives that spearhead sustainable practices across all aspects of sustainability, and I engage with the UN Sustainable Development Goals .
I recognise the importance of being digitally capable and engage with Jisc's six elements of digital capability to reflect on, identify and improve my level of digital capability.	I prioritise becoming expert in familiar tools and embracing relevant new technologies to confidently use them and be efficient in my role.	I advance the understanding of digital capability through encouraging conversations and signposting development opportunities.	I influence discussions about the digital capabilities required in my organisation and ensure a culture of digital learning and capability.

5.

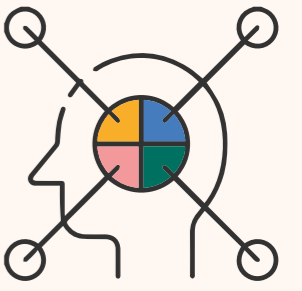
Focusing on Results and Taking Accountability; encompassing Information Governance



Associate	Member	Accredited Member	Fellow
I understand what success looks like for my role and play an active role in setting and achieving my objectives.	I align my work with the overall objectives of the project, team or organisation and monitor key performance indicators (KPIs) using data to measure and improve results.	I develop and execute evidence-based plans that contribute to the achievement of longterm organisational goals.	I influence high impact outcomes that align with the organisation's mission and values and lead teams towards achieving ambitious and meaningful results.
I prioritise effectively to maintain a high standard of work when under pressure.	I reflect on my performance and address any issues that may arise, taking responsibility for both successes and setbacks.	I foster a culture of continuous improvement and accountability, embedding learning from experience.	I drive a culture where individuals take ownership of their work and are held responsible for delivering results.
I understand and follow relevant data protection regulations and organisational policies to ensure compliance, handling sensitive information with care.	I consider risk to identify potential vulnerabilities in information handling processes and take necessary steps to mitigate risks.	I advocate for ethical data collection, processing, and sharing practices within the organisation.	I drive a culture of continuous improvement by regularly evaluating and enhancing information governance processes and adapting to evolving regulatory requirements.

6.

Being Agile and Adaptable; encompassing Embracing and Driving Change



Associate	Member	Accredited Member	Fellow
I anticipate potential issues and take steps to address them, even in the face of uncertainty.	I actively seek new approaches by analysing information efficiently and make well-informed choices to achieve positive outcomes.	I adapt longterm strategies to changing situations, identifying opportunities for innovation and improvement.	I enable agility by championing new approaches and innovation and minimising barriers to implementation.
I understand my own resilience and how to maintain composure during demanding situations.	I develop resilience by embracing challenges as opportunities for growth and learning, using setbacks as a chance to improve.	I role model behaviours that support well-being and encourage others to take responsibility for their own wellbeing.	I influence and endorse structures and processes that support well-being and resilience.
I adapt to change by maintaining a positive attitude while adjusting my approaches and priorities as needed.	I acknowledge that change is continual and seek to understand the drivers and how individuals experience change.	I lead change by clearly articulating what needs to change and why and supporting individuals to make that happen.	I create an environment and culture that is change ready and evidence the value of change to a range of stakeholders

7.

Delivering Service Excellence; encompassing Stakeholder Perspectives



Associate	Member	Accredited Member	Fellow
I demonstrate professionalism in all my interactions with students, and staff, maintaining a positive and respectful approach and representing the institution's values.	I use feedback from stakeholders to ensure a high-quality professional service and to identify areas for improvement.	I build innovative approaches and best practices and offer insights and solutions that contribute to student and institutional success.	I create a culture of service excellence within the institution by leading by example, inspiring and empowering others to deliver outstanding service.
I apply attention to detail by ensuring that tasks and services are delivered with precision and accuracy.	I balance the speed and quality of responses to guarantee the best outcome for the stakeholder.	I implement robust quality assurance processes to ensure consistent and high-quality service delivery throughout the institution.	I listen to front line staff to understand and facilitate changes needed to deliver service excellence.
I attend closely to the specific needs of students, staff and other stakeholders, seeing things from their perspective and responding to enquiries or requests swiftly.	I prioritise understanding the needs and requirements of a range of stakeholders and tailor responses and services to meet these needs.	I develop mechanisms that ensure the student voice, staff and other stakeholders are heard and understood.	I build strategic partnerships within and outside the institution to ensure services are person-centred.

8.

Engaging with the Wider Context; encompassing Sharing Best Practice



Associate	Member	Accredited Member	Fellow
I participate in opportunities to connect with colleagues from across my institution and gain an understanding of the institution's overall mission and values.	I network with my peers from across the sector and stay informed about the wider context relevant to my field.	I connect with expertise across the sector to adapt my practice and effect institutional responses to national issues.	I advance high-level discussions and advocacy on higher education issues, actively contributing to the development of the sector's future direction.
I engage in cross departmental activities to gain exposure to different aspects of HE and contribute to broader institutional goals.	I maintain an active interest in the way the institution works to inform my practice and enable others to understand their role and that of their team within the organisation.	I appraise policy developments and changes at regional and national levels to understand the broader context in which the institution operates and apply this understanding to influence change.	I engage with the national and global context to anticipate sector disruption and help shape the institutional response.
I recognise the value of sharing knowledge and learning from my practice and review best practice within my team.	I participate in opportunities to share knowledge and learning from my practice through collaborative working across teams in my organisation.	I share best practice within and external to my organisation and encourage others to share knowledge and learning from their practice.	I mentor junior professionals in the field, nurturing talent and promoting the advancement of the profession within the higher education context.

Using the Framework: For your own personal and professional development

Self-assessment

Reviewing performance in current role

- To identify and reflect on strengths and areas for development
- To focus choice of learning and development activities on CPD needs and organisational priorities
- To facilitate career planning

Personal development planning

Using or adapting the template documents to plan, record and review your CPD

- To aid reflection and self-awareness
- To set personal and professional development objectives by developing a personal development plan (PDP)
- To take a structured and planned approach to CPD
- To focus and prioritise learning and development activity

Discussion with line manager

On-going day-to-day interaction Appraisal - input your self-assessment of strengths and areas for development against the Framework to your appraisal discussion

- To provide additional structure and depth to review of performance
- To recognise achievements and strengths
- To gain support for CPD activity to meet PDP objectives

Career planning

Identifying the behaviours appropriate for other roles

- To assess readiness for career moves
- To focus thought and activities around the relevant strengths and areas for development
- To increase prospects for securing more senior roles

Activities and outcomes

You can benefit from the Framework regardless of whether it is being used more widely in your institution. Here is a summary of some ideas about how you might use the Framework as an individual. This is by no means an exhaustive list and you will have your own ideas about other ways that you could use the Framework to meet your specific needs.

Recruitment and selection

As an applicant

As a recruitment panel member

- A framework to structure HE applications and CVs
- To focus on the behavioural requirements of a job in an objective and specific way
- To use common language within the sector

Induction

As a new starter

- To gain a comprehensive picture of role requirements, including job tasks, skills, knowledge, qualifications and behaviours
- To understand the HEI's/department's expectations

Feedback

Informal feedback – seeking feedback from or giving feedback to colleagues in a structured way.

Formal feedback – asking your appraiser to provide feedback or to seek it from other colleagues structured around the Framework.

- To increase self-awareness
- To identify strengths and areas for development
- To facilitate personal development planning
- To provide structured feedback to colleagues about their strengths and areas for development
- To improve communication and workplace relationships

Professional Recognition

Using the Framework to demonstrate professionalism

- To provide professional identity
- To gain AHEP Accredited / Fellow status
- To role model excellence as a HE professional

Practical exercises to engage with the Framework

Whilst it is not possible to give step-by-step guidance for all of the activities listed above, the following is a practical exercise that has been widely used.

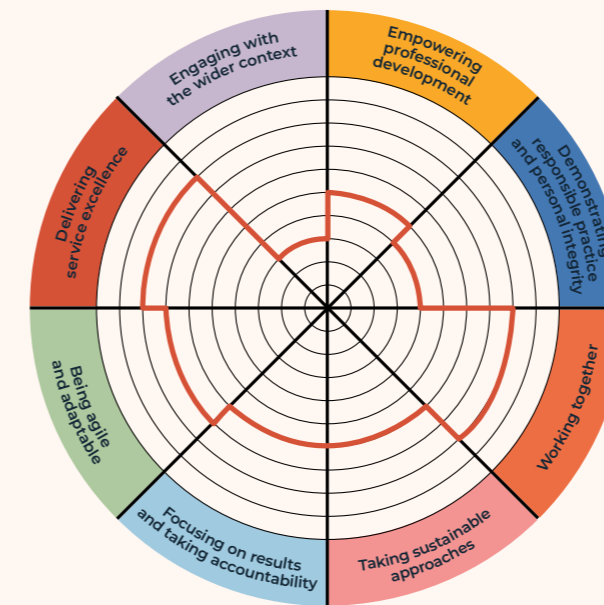


Figure 3: Professional Commitments Self-Assessment Wheel

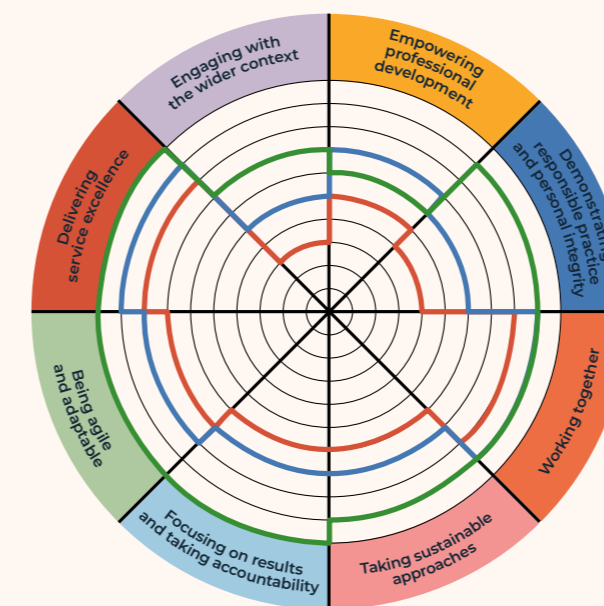


Figure 4: Example of completed self-assessment wheel

The wheel self-assessment activity

This is the most widely used tool for self-assessment and it builds on the idea of the coaching wheel. To complete this activity, you require a blank wheel activity exercise sheet (appendix 1) and three different coloured pens or pencils.

1.

Read through the descriptors of each of the eight professional commitments found in this document.

2.

Consider how confident you feel in each of the eight areas on a scale of 1-10 and put a mark along each axis, with the centre being 0 (not at all confident) and the outer edge of the wheel being 10 (extremely confident), that reflects your self-rating. Be honest with yourself, take a balanced view and you will end up with a good snapshot of your current strengths and areas for further improvement. Once you have all eight marks, join them up so you have a footprint like something in Figure 3.

3.

Then consider how confident you would like to feel in each of the eight areas and using the same scale and process use a different colour pen to produce a second shape. Lastly, consider where your organisation needs you to be bearing in mind its strategy and vision and what you know about likely future developments in the HE sector. In the same way as before, use a different colour pen again to produce a third shape. Your final wheel will look something like this (the red shape reflects how confident the person feels now, the blue shape reflects how confident the person would like to feel and the green shape reflects the organisation's needs): Figure 4.

You will then be able to see at a glance:

- **Where your strengths lie**
- **Where you may have further development needs or future aspirations**
- **How your strengths and development needs map against the requirements of your role or the organisation**

Beyond the initial activity described above, you can use the results to help you think through your preferences and career aspirations in greater depth and reflect on whether your skills, knowledge and preferences are a good fit with your current role. When using a tool of this sort, it is important to analyse why certain judgements are being made.

Pertinent questions for self-reflection upon completion of the wheel activity include:

- How comfortable did you feel completing the activity?
- How often do you take the time to reflect on your role and your performance in this way?
- Were there any surprises?
- What are the implications if there are areas where your aspirations are above the organisational need for your role?
- Where does your interest lie, and what are the implications for your role, your team and your career?
- What information sources are you using to make your assessment?
- Is your assessment based on facts or assumptions?
- Would you be happy to share your completed wheel activity? If so, with whom?

Once you have identified the professional commitments where your strengths and areas for development lie, you can consider the specific behaviour, knowledge and skill attributes listed within each of those areas to provide greater detail. These can then be translated into learning and development objectives and recorded in a personal development plan (PDP).



Hints and tips

For getting the most from the Framework for your own personal and professional development

- **Ensure** that you have familiarised yourself with the Framework and are clear about why you are using it.
- **Engage with the Framework** in the context of your role, your institution and the wider sector.
- **Consider the Framework alongside other information** you have about your role.
- When **writing a PDP** make sure that you consider the results of your self-assessment alongside other sources of information about your development needs.
- **Be realistic** about the objectives you set for your development (for example, how much time will you have to devote to learning and development activities, which areas of the Framework are of highest importance in your role, how committed you are to the objectives you set).
- **Set learning and development objectives** to maximise and enhance your strengths as well as those to meet development needs.
- **Set success criteria** for each of your learning and development objectives – i.e. how will you know when you've been successful?
- **Consider whether you wish to discuss the outcomes** of your self-assessment reflection with anyone else. For example, it can be really helpful to input this to

your appraisal.

- **Keep up to date** with learning and development opportunities in your organisation and beyond.
- Use the Framework with colleagues to **develop the team's performance and profile** (the next section of this Guide focuses on using the Framework in a team context).
- If you find self-assessment difficult **ask a trusted friend or colleague** who you know will give open and constructive feedback for their opinion.
- You will get the most benefit from engaging with the Framework if you are **honest** with yourself in your self-assessment.
- **Share your experience** of using the Framework with others.



Using the Framework with colleagues and with teams

Team Development Planning

Using or adapting the template documents to assess your team's performance and to plan, record and review your team's CPD

- To identify the team's strengths and areas for development
- To take a structured approach to team CPD
- To guide team learning and development activity and use of staff development resources
- To enhance team performance

Discussion with colleagues

In on-going 1:1 interaction with team members

- To raise awareness of the Framework
- To provide additional structure and depth to on-going review of performance
- To recognise achievements and strengths
- To provide support to enable colleagues to meet PDP objectives

Managing change

Planning and implementing change

- To provide vision and clarity about the future needs of the organisation
- To refocus the team's activities
- To identify transferable skills, knowledge and experience
- To support colleagues through periods of change

Appraisal

Reviewing performance, setting objectives and discussion of career development/aspirations

- To capture achievements and strengths that may otherwise be overlooked
- To identify priority development areas for the next review period
- To provide a structure for appraisal discussions
- To provide feedback to colleagues in a structured way

Activities and outcomes

If you would like to use the Framework to develop your team and others with whom you work, there are numerous ways in which it can support you. Below are a few examples:

Recruitment and selection

Writing job descriptions and person specifications Framing interview questions

- To focus on the behavioural requirements of a job in an objective and specific way
- To use common language within the sector

Induction

As line manager of new team members As someone who contributes to induction for new starters in other areas

- To provide a comprehensive picture of role requirements, including job tasks, skills, knowledge, qualifications and behaviours
- To clarify the HEI's expectations

Informal feedback

Providing informal feedback to colleagues in a structured way Eliciting feedback from team members

- To increase own and others' self-awareness
- To provide structured feedback to colleagues about their strengths and areas for development
- To support colleagues to provide feedback on your own performance as a line manager
- To improve communication and workplace relationships

Professional Recognition

Using the Framework to demonstrate professionalism

- To foster professional identity
- To encourage colleagues to join AHEP and/or to gain AHEP Accredited / Fellow status
- To role model professionalism in HE professional services

Practical Exercise to Engage Your Team

As well as being a tool for individuals, the Framework and professional commitments can be used in a variety of ways to start a conversation about how the team is working and its approach.

This could be done in several ways, e.g.

- Take the descriptor for a single professional commitment (listed on page 5) and explore what this means for your team.
- What exactly does this professional commitment mean in our context?
- To what extent is your team demonstrating the commitment?
- What does it look like when we as a team are doing this really well?
- What strengths do individuals have in this area?
- What can we learn from each other about this professional commitment?
- What additional development might the team need in this area?

As a team, discuss the relevance of each professional commitment (using the headline descriptors on page 8) to the key activities that your team undertakes. These discussions can inform a prioritised list of those commitments based on your specific context. All of the professional commitments are important, but depending upon your team some will be of greater importance than others. The Ranking Activity (appendix 2) can be used to help target staff development resources or inform group activities to develop skills and knowledge around those commitments that contribute to the success of your team. You should rank the eight areas 1-8, with 1 being of highest importance and 8 being of lowest importance. You may find that some areas are of equal importance, for example you may have two or three at number 1 and so on.

The Framework can be used as a lens to consider strengths, development needs and career aspirations individually across the whole team. Individuals can complete the wheel self-assessment activity (see page 21), and these can be used collectively as a starting point to discuss team strengths and areas for development. The wheel self-assessment can provide a team profile as a basis for team reflection.



Hints and tips for using the Framework to enhance team performance

- **Provide a briefing session** about the Framework to ensure that all members of the team are starting from the same knowledge base.
- **Be open** about your own self-assessment.
- Set the use of the Framework within the **wider context of the department/institution/sector**.
- **Build enthusiasm** for the Framework by sharing your vision for what you are trying to achieve by applying the Framework within the team.
- Focus on the **positive benefits** to the individuals.
- Recognise that colleagues who find self-assessment difficult may require more **support** than others.
- **Acknowledge** that working with a Framework may be unfamiliar to many colleagues and that some colleagues may feel 'under the spotlight' or exposed.
- **Reassure** colleagues about confidentiality.
- **Be transparent** about how any collected data will be used.
- Use the Framework to **highlight key strengths** that the team has and to provide feedback on the collective value of those strengths.
- **Be creative** in identifying and creating development opportunities within the team's day-to-day work.
- Ensure that you are **well informed** about learning and development opportunities in your organisation and beyond.
- **Share your experiences** of using the Framework with:
 - Your line manager/head of department or unit
 - Peers and other teams within your department/institution
 - AHEP
 - HR/OD/staff development
 - Peers and other contacts in your HE networks outside of your institution
- **Disseminate learning** across the sector, for example by writing an article or presenting at a conference.



Using the Framework at institutional level

Issues to consider:

The first important step in using the Framework at institutional level is to determine whether it needs to be tailored. There are various ways that you might approach this. Some institutions simply decide through discussion within HR and the senior management team. Others consult more widely across the organisation and some embark on a full consultation exercise.

The purpose of the consultation would be to assess whether the Framework works within the context of the organisation and to explore its relationship to any existing processes and frameworks. It can be invaluable to use such a consultation exercise as an opportunity to identify barriers to implementation and to elicit ideas about how best to implement and embed the Framework within the institution.

As a starting point when considering the potential value of the professional commitments, HEIs might consider the following relationships:



Figure 5: Assessing the relationship of the Framework to the institutional context

Here are some suggested questions to consider when embarking on use of the Professional Framework at institutional level, some, or all of which may be relevant to your institution:

- What is the organisational issue that you are trying to address by using the Framework?
- What are you trying to achieve?
- What's the scope of the project, for example how many staff/areas of the institution will it affect?
- What is the timeframe for implementation?
- Is there any internal consultation that needs to take place?
- Who are the key stakeholders, and how will you gain buy-in?
- What will the success criteria be for implementation?
- What are the potential barriers to success, and how can you minimise them?
- What resources will you need?
- Is the Framework fit for purpose in its original form or does it need some adjustment for your institution?
- Do you need to set up a project team and/or steering group to oversee the project?
- How will the Framework fit with any pre-existing institutional frameworks?
- What is the current level of awareness of the Professional Framework in your institution?
- How will you promote/market/communicate the Framework internally?
- How will you access/engage the relevant staff?
- Is it most appropriate to implement use of the Framework across the institution at the outset, or to run a few smaller scale pilots first?
- Would some additional support, for example AHEP consultancy be of value?

Activities and outcomes

Some of the potential ways in which the professional commitments can be used at institutional level include:

Organisational Development

Using the Framework to support restructuring Mapping existing skills, knowledge and behaviours to future needs and organisational strategy

- To support managers in implementing change
- To support staff through periods of transition
- To facilitate culture change
- To encourage cross-boundary thinking and working
- To encourage movement of staff within the organisation
- To provide organisational definition of excellence in professional services

Learning and Development

Mapping of existing provision against the professional commitments Design of learning and development activities aligned to professional commitments To support the development of an institutional CPD strategy/policy for HE professionals

- To identify gaps in provision
- To focus staff development resources on filling those gaps
- To provide clarity for staff about the relevance of in-house courses and other learning and development opportunities to the professional commitments
- To facilitate personal development and career planning
- To gain AHEP institutional endorsement
- To improve individual and organisational performance
- To increase employee engagement

Recruitment, Selection and Induction

Job descriptions and person specifications Further particulars for applicants Selection processes

- To focus on the behavioural, knowledge and skill requirements of roles in an objective and specific way
- To provide a comprehensive picture of role requirements, including job tasks, skills, knowledge, qualifications and behaviours
- To enhance existing processes
- To provide a sector benchmark for recruitment between institutions
- To provide more clarity to applicants and new starters about the expectations of professional roles

Succession Planning

Developing staff within the organisation to prepare them to compete for more senior roles

- To maximise the skills and knowledge of existing staff
- To attract and retain valued staff
- To increase motivation
- To contribute to talent management

Professional Recognition

- To foster an increased sense of professional identity for HE Professionals
- To provide equity of CPD opportunities with those offered to other categories of staff
- To support those applying for AHEP Accredited or Fellow status

Hints and tips for successful implementation at institutional level

- **Be clear** about the purpose and desired outcomes of using the Framework. You should be able to articulate this in two or three sentences.
- Set the success criteria and evaluation methodologies **at the outset**.
- Ensure that those using the Framework for the first time are **well informed** about the Framework itself and the purpose of using it.
- **Provide briefing and training** for all users.
- **Ensure** that you have sufficient learning and development opportunities in place to meet the CPD needs identified by staff using the Framework.
- **Consider budget implications** as part of the planning stage.
- **Review** existing training courses and development materials to incorporate reference to the Framework.
- **Brief** any external learning and development providers about the Framework and require them to refer to it in the sessions/materials they deliver.
- **Consult** your institutional AHEP Advocate(s) and union representatives at the outset and update them on progress.
- **Gain the support** of a member of the senior management team to champion the Framework.
- **Celebrate and communicate successes** as you go along by sharing case studies to ensure staff awareness and build momentum.
- **Plan for longer-term embedding**, not just for implementation.



Resources

While implementing the Framework is a welcome opportunity, it may seem a little daunting. The following resources are available to support you, you can access any or all of them at any time during your work with the Framework, depending on your needs and those of your institution.

The Association has a wealth of resources to help and support you and these include:

AHEP website
ahep.ac.uk

The AHEP website provides other useful resources to support personal and professional development, for example:

- Information about Accredited and Fellow status.
- Information about the institutional partnership scheme.
- Details of our national events and services such as, conference and symposia and Special Interest Groups (SIGs) and our national development programme labelled to indicate the specific professional commitments they are relevant to.
- The members only area contains online tools for planning and recording professional development.

AHEP Mentoring

AHEP Mentoring is here to connect our members with the knowledge and experience of supportive colleagues from across the AHEP community. The scheme is open to any AHEP member who would like help with their career development. Visit our website for more information and how to apply.

Consultancy support

A number of consultants are available to assist you. You can request the support of a consultant by contacting the AHEP team.

Institutional Partnerships

Institutional partnerships empower and unite the professional services community across universities colleges and educational institutions of all sizes and locations.

Being an institutional partner demonstrates a commitment to best practice, supporting and developing the professional services community and advocating within the sector. A partnership package could include access to and award of the 'Mark of Excellence'.

A final word

This guide has been meticulously crafted to assist you in effectively implementing the AHEP Professional Framework as an individual, team or institution. Your specific approach to its utilisation will naturally vary based on your unique circumstances. The true power of this Framework lies in its adaptability to diverse contexts.

However, one unifying aspect remains constant: the transformative impact it can have on the professional development journeys of HE professionals. We are confident that embracing the Professional Framework will yield substantial benefits for all involved. We encourage you to not only integrate it into your professional practice but also champion its adoption to elevate the status of HE professionals within your institution.

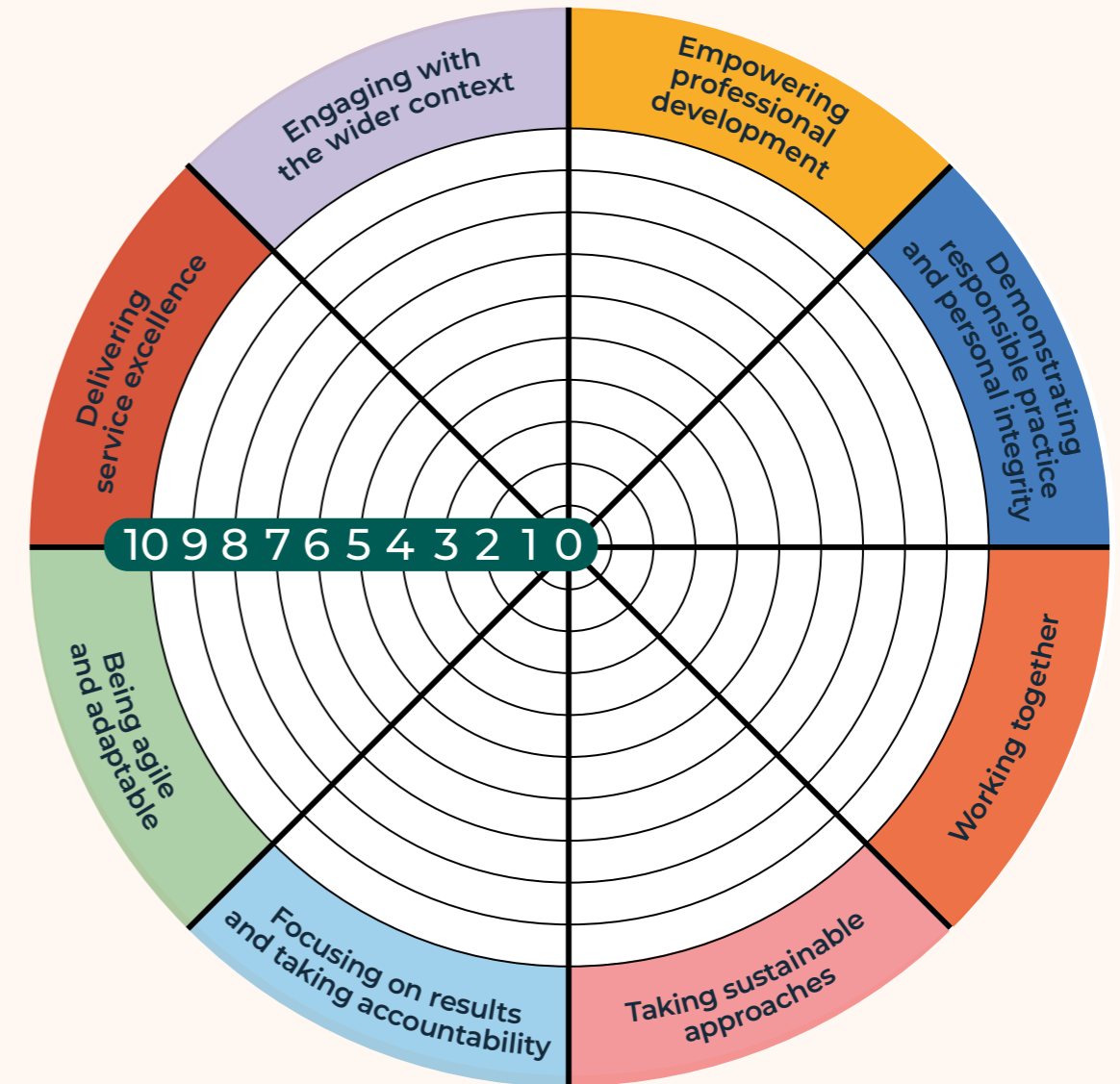


Appendix 1

Professional Commitments Analysis Wheel

Name:

Date:



Centre = 0, Outer edge = 10

- On a scale of 1-10, identify your current personal confidence related to each of the nine professional behaviours. Join the dots.
- Next map where you would like to be and join those dots.
- Finally map where your organisation would like you to be on this wheel.
- From this, identify specific areas for development and derive goals for your PDP.

Appendix 2

Ranking activity



Ranking	Professional Commitment	Descriptor
	Empowering Professional Development	Investing in development to enhance professional skills, knowledge and behaviours underpinned by reflective practice. Empowering self and others to maximise professional potential. Developing personal responsibility, greater self-awareness, and understanding how to bring the best out of self and others. This commitment to empowering professional development acknowledges that Leadership is not tied to a specific position or title but exists regardless of your level within the organisation, displaying a range of behaviours and attitudes to impact and achieve organisational goals positively.
	Demonstrating Responsible Practice and Personal Integrity	Upholding high ethical standards, building positive relationships and trust, and demonstrating personal integrity and professionalism in all interactions and decisions. To consistently apply values and principles in decision-making and actions. At the core of responsible practice and personal integrity is Equity, Diversity and Inclusion , advocating inclusivity and fostering fairness and respect for all.
	Working Together	Collaborating to achieve positive results whilst recognising and valuing individual contributions. Being aware of how your behaviour influences others and working in a way that builds trust and mutual respect. Embraced within the commitment to working together are robust Communication skills to promote effective collaboration and ensure clarity in interactions.
	Taking Sustainable Approaches	Ensuring a balance between economic, environmental and social sustainability. Adopting sustainable practices to safeguard the long-term well-being of individuals, the organisation and the environment. Identifying and making the most productive use of resources, including people, time, information, networks, budgets and digital tools. Pivotal to the commitment to taking sustainable approaches is advancing Digital Capability , becoming expert in familiar tools and embracing relevant new technologies and tools as they emerge.
	Focusing on Results and Taking Accountability	Ensuring a high-quality, professional service to all stakeholders, including students, academic and professional colleagues, and external partners. Adopting an ethos of continuous improvement through reflective practice, seeking feedback and creative thinking. Fundamental to service excellence is understanding Stakeholder Perspectives to deliver experiences, services and environments that are person-centred.

Appendix 2

Ranking activity



Ranking	Professional Commitment	Descriptor
	Being Agile and Adaptable	Actively seeking new approaches and adapting strategies and processes, learning from experience to respond effectively to changing circumstances. Supporting your own resilience and well-being and that of others to maintain flexibility. Central to the commitment to agility and adaptability is Embracing and Driving Change , adopting a positive outlook and acknowledging that change is continual.
	Delivering Service Excellence	Ensuring a high-quality, professional service to all stakeholders, including students, academic and professional colleagues, and external partners. Adopting an ethos of continuous improvement through reflective practice, seeking feedback and creative thinking. Fundamental to service excellence is understanding Stakeholder Perspectives to deliver experiences, services and environments that are person-centred.
	Engaging with the Wider Context	Enhancing your contribution to the organisation through understanding the wider organisation and sector and showing commitment to organisational values. Keeping up-to-date with current issues and trends. Sharing Best Practice is encompassed within the commitment to engaging with the wider context for the benefit of others, the organisation and the sector.

Sincere thanks are extended to all the individuals and groups who were involved in the consultation process to develop the AHEP Professional Framework.

This guide is an adaptation of Using the AUA CPD Framework: A Practical Guide to Success (2016) and has been reviewed and amended by Dr Ella Popper, AHEP, Head of Professional Development, and Sophie Lovejoy, AHEP, Consultant.

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