

Your Name	Dr Rachel Elizabeth Thompson
Institution/organisation/other	University of New South Wales University of Technology Sydney Western Sydney University
Job Title	UNSW Adjunct Senior Lecturer UTS Casual Senior Lecturer WSU Adjunct Fellow
Email address	rachelt@unsw.edu.au
Your HEA Fellowship Status (if appropriate)	
Relationship to Applicant	Recent colleague in UNSW Medicine Faculty, Medical Program
How long have you worked with the applicant (insert dates)	2017- Dec 2020
Declaration	<p>Please check the box below to indicate that you have read and agree to the following statement:</p> <p><i>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></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I have read and understood the declaration</p> <p>Date: 12 March 2021</p>

# Supporting Statement for Dr Linda Ferrington

Application for Senior Fellowship of the HEA

As Faculty Learning & Teaching Fellow 2007-2020, I was responsible for running the faculty medical education induction, mentoring new staff and organising the Medical Education Interest Group and newsletter (MedEd). Also, I was an education-focused senior lecturer, convenor of Quality of Medical Practice in the medicine program, 2004-2020. I first met Dr Linda Ferrington in 2017, as she began her current position as coordinator of Phase 1 medicine at the Port Macquarie Rural Clinical School. Taking on this role one week before the campus opened to Year 1 & 2 students, Linda stepped directly into a complex situation. She met this challenge extremely well and has continued to forge lasting collaborative relationships with professional and teaching staff, locally and across the UNSW medicine campuses. Her professionalism, high-level teaching expertise and firm commitment to support her students and staff to gain their best possible experience at the RCS is impressive. I am honoured to support her candidature for Senior Fellowship at the Higher Education Academy.

## **D3.I and D3.IV Successful engagement and appropriate teaching practices across all Areas of Activity A1-A5**

Linda's current position is as an education-focused senior lecturer for the delivery of the medicine program at Port Macquarie Rural School. In this role she coordinates the timetable for the rural school, also convenes certain subjects, teaches herself within health science classes, and also contributes to the evaluation of teaching practices across the Phase 1 program. Over the past few years, she has been deeply involved in curricular development, design and review roles in several Phase 1 courses. For instance, I am grateful for her informed and efficient input into developing online content and the review of content in my Quality of Medical Practice (QMP) curriculum. In particular, her feedback and skills in using online platforms (e.g. MS Teams) were extremely helpful in improving the student experience during the transfer to online classes during 2020.

The teaching examples in Linda's application provide only a glimpse of the time and energy that she dedicates to maximising the student experience of timetabled classes and throughout their related study time. Her holistic approach to caring for students and promoting their best interests is to be applauded, especially during the challenging 2020 teaching year. I have been fortunate to view Linda's teaching style directly – whilst visiting the Port Macquarie campus, via virtual link to practical classes, and also when working together in the virtual classroom for various QMP and medicine curriculum activities. I was consistently impressed by Linda's effective teaching approach, and her ability to adapt and design variations to set activities to maximise the student experience within the classroom, whilst utilising the available facilities, technologies and online spaces. She is totally dedicated to creating an effective learning environment that provides interactive, frequent feedback to learners and guides them successfully through each activity.

## **D3.II Appropriate knowledge/understanding of Core Knowledge K1-K6**

Linda is thoroughly committed to evidence-based teaching. Her personal approach to scholarly practice centres around a reflective approach which stimulates her thirst for knowledge about learning and her personal learning journey towards gaining new teaching skills. This is demonstrated by her undertaking relevant training and qualifications, and evident in how she applies her learning within the day-to-day challenges that she meets, whether it is for students, or for educational leadership, or for the benefit of staff improvement. I am inspired by her ability to combine her vast disciplinary knowledge in her educational research and scholarly teaching methods to achieve high-level teaching standards. In addition, as an advocate of 'closing the loop', she is consistent in seeking and acting up evaluation and feedback of the learning and teaching provided on campus for her students and also for her staff.

# Supporting Statement for Dr Linda Ferrington

Application for Senior Fellowship of the HEA

## **D3.III A commitment to all the Professional Values V1-V4**

Linda came to higher education through an interesting position in Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh, where a key challenge was to provide supported learning for a diverse student body. Thus, she was challenged at an early stage of her lecturing career to adapt and focus her teaching for diverse cultural backgrounds and different socioeconomic groups and through this experience she has gained a strong belief in maximising every student's experience and has become an advocate for staff and students. Hence, in terms of professional values, Linda has advanced understanding of diversity, inclusivity and equity issues within the higher education arena, and is dedicated to applying this knowledge to create a just and caring environment for her students, staff and colleagues. Her students and staff have benefitted greatly from her advocacy and support, and faculty has profited as she has shared her knowledge and approach in various medical education forums. She sets an example that we all look up to.

Linda works tirelessly to achieve equity of participation and to enable all learners and staff to reach their potential. This approach achieved a very positive impact across her local rural campus during 2020 during COVID lockdown and switch to online teaching for Phase 1 students. She foresaw issues arising and was quick at noting problems as they arose. She was quick to act to work with staff and students to develop activities and resources that guide, support and challenge the RCS student cohorts during lockdown and the continued online teaching situation. Further, she positively influenced our approach with the metro students as she shared her practice, ideas and exemplars.

## **D3.v Successful incorporation of subject and pedagogic research and/or scholarship within the above activities, as part of an integrated approach to academic practice**

Linda is committed to connecting and sharing research locally and at a wider level. Linda has forged internal and external research relationships that are widening the scholarship of the RCS. She is proactive in presenting and discussing her research within faculty, across the education-focused network at UNSW and has presented her innovative research nationally and internationally. Despite her heavy teaching workload, Linda is committed to carrying out, presenting and publishing locally relevant research. Over the past few years, she has successfully integrated her understanding of pedagogy with her special research interests. She has developed and evaluated new and innovative activities for students, including exploring innovative social media technology in supporting student learning and within curricula. Currently, she is exploring rural student performance and issues of diversity, and pedagogical approaches to maximise student achievement.

## **D3.vi. Successful engagement in continuing professional development in relation to teaching, learning, assessment, scholarship and, as appropriate, related academic or professional practices**

As Linda describes in her application, her original background was exclusively within health science research. However, she elected to change to a teaching career. Stimulated by the challenges in her first lecturing position, she sought appropriate training and gained educational qualifications, including a Postgraduate Certificate in Higher and Professional Education. Her pedagogical knowledge and skills have evolved substantially over this short time. She has an excellent approach to planning and designing her classes and systematically and carefully reviews her work in order to improve content and teaching, and also to be ready for each new challenge.

# Supporting Statement for Dr Linda Ferrington

Application for Senior Fellowship of the HEA

This rapid transition from talented researcher to effective educator speaks volumes about her commitment to her teaching. As a highly reflective professional, she continually seeks to improve and to develop her teaching knowledge and skills, whilst grounding this successfully within her discipline of health sciences. She has expanded her personal and workplace educational sphere by developing a substantial network of scholarly practitioners at the rural school, championing local educational research through grants and collaborations. Moreover, she is dedicated to guiding and supporting other teaching staff and actively fosters the practice of evidence-based teaching across the rural and metro clinical and campus-based schools.

## **D3.VII Successful coordination, support, supervision, management and/or mentoring of others (whether individuals and/or teams) in relation to teaching and learning**

As described with the application, Linda has been mentoring her local teaching staff successfully. Indeed, Dr Macer-Wright has just gained FHEA. As Director of Research at Port Macquarie RCS, Linda has expanded the opportunities for students and supervisors across the campus, whilst also contributing substantially to the running of the Year 4 Committee and the Independent Learning Project curriculum and assessment centrally. Linda's background experience in research and current involvement in research ethics has helped guide the committee through recent curricular changes.

In addition, Linda organises the faculty's Medical Education Interest Group (MedEd) and the faculty staff induction training days for new teaching staff. New to these roles in 2021, she is already making an impact by inviting expert and external speakers on topics that will support our staff further in the challenges ahead. This year she has been able to invite Dr Kayley Lyons, the Ware Research Fellow in Pharmacy Education and Leadership at Monash University, to present this month, on content from her team's recent article in *Medical Teacher* entitled "The clinical educator's guide to fostering learner motivation: AMEE Guide No. 137." In addition, she organises Medicine's cross-faculty seminars and the UNSW Medicine Annual Education Forum. Last December, she assisted me in organising the forum, ably co-chairing the maiden online format, with a variety of presentations from across the faculty. With over 90 online attendees and ~29 presenters, including students and graduates, this meeting was a huge success at the end of difficult teaching year. Linda was an excellent final speaker with her analysis of 2020, making an impassioned call for hope in these challenging times: "Connectedness in a COVID-shaped world."

**In conclusion**, based on my association with Linda over the past four years and the evidence in the attached application, I strongly support and endorse Dr Linda Ferrington's application for Senior Fellowship of the HEA.



*Dr Rachel Thompson*

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