

BCS Fellow supporter guidance

This detailed guidance provides you with everything you need to know about volunteering as a *BCS Fellow supporter* to help mentor applicants for Fellowship.

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The role of a BCS Fellow supporter

As a Fellow supporter, your role is to guide and mentor Fellowship applicants through their application process. You'll be there to assist them in completing the application form, helping them select appropriate examples from their experience and advising them on how to best present their evidence so they receive a fair assessment.

Once the applicant has been told the outcome of their application, you'll be responsible for reviewing the assessor's feedback with them and offering advice as to how they might action the feedback in their working practice – or in a future FBCS application should they have been unsuccessful this time.

(The application outcome decided by the BCS assessor is solely dependent on the quality of the evidence provided by the applicant, and never a reflection on the supporter.)

Supporter criteria

To apply for Fellowship, an applicant requires two types of supporter: a supporter who's an existing BCS Fellow to verify that they're ready for FBCS *and* a work-related supporter who can validate the accuracy of their evidence. This can be one and the same person.

Requirements for each supporter type:

- **BCS Fellow supporter**
 - You currently hold BCS Fellow membership.
- **Work-related supporter**
 - You've worked with the applicant for at least six months consecutively at some point in their career.
 - You have a professional understanding of the applicant's line of work – for example, you're familiar with their specialism.
 - You're familiar with the applicant's **recent** work – even if you haven't worked with them for some time, you're aware of the work they're doing at the point of applying for Fellowship.

If you're a current BCS Fellow *and* you've worked with the applicant before, you could be eligible to be their work-related supporter as well as their BCS Fellow supporter. This means the applicant will only need one supporter, you.

How to become a BCS Fellow supporter

There are four routes to supporting an application as a BCS Fellow supporter:

1. An applicant approaches you directly because they know you.
2. You set up your profile on the BCS mentoring platform in MyBCS where applicants are able to find you and make contact to request your support. (The BCS mentoring platform is only available to existing BCS members so these applicants will be looking to upgrade.)
3. You can email us at processing@bcs.uk to volunteer as a BCS Fellow supporter for applicants who don't already know a BCS Fellow – our Service Delivery team will then get in touch with you when there's an applicant requiring support.
4. When you volunteer as a BCS Fellow supporter for applicants who don't already know a BCS Fellow, you may also be contacted by an account manager from our Organisational Membership team to ask if you'll support an applicant who's part of an OM contract.

If you're a BCS Fellowship assessor, you won't be asked to act as a supporter for an applicant who you don't know as this would create an unnecessary conflict of interest. You are still able to support an application for someone you do know.

Taking part in the application process

When you become a BCS Fellow supporter, you are considered the applicant's mentor. This means your role has greater responsibility than that of a work-related supporter.

The following diagram shows the stages in the application process where you'll be expected to work with the applicant to support their application and their professional development.

Completing the application form

Advise how to apply and present evidence

Before submission, review the evidence against the criteria

Application submitted

Ask the applicant to let you know when they submit their application – it means we'll soon be asking you for your recommendation statement

Recommendation statement*

Clarify how you know the applicant

Confirm that you've read the application

Confirm the applicant is working at the level expected of a Fellow

Further evidence required during assessment

If the assessor asks for more evidence from the applicant, you can help them identify and supply appropriate information

Notification of outcome

Review the assessor's feedback with the applicant

Recommend areas for improvement or CPD ideas

*If you're also the applicant's work-related supporter you'll be asked to state the period(s) that you've worked with the applicant, what you worked on together, and confirmation that you're familiar with the work they're doing now (if they are in employment).

Supporting the completion of the application form

A key element of your supporter role is in helping the applicant identify and evidence the best examples of their experience – those that most clearly demonstrate their leadership skills and the impact and influence they've had on the information technology profession and on "making IT good for society."

Here's a summary of the FBCS criteria (for full details see the *Appendices*).

Body of work	Professional impact	Standing in the community
Invention and innovation	Inspiring others	Awards
Entrepreneurship	Interdisciplinary collaboration	Governance
Responsibility	(Inter)national policy making	Public influencer
Skills development	Diversity and inclusion	Assessor
Research	Mentoring and coaching	
Consultancy	Sustainability – social or environmental	
	Outreach	

Applicants are required to evidence four of these criteria, selected as follows:

- one from *Body of work*
- one from *Professional impact*
- one from *Standing in the community*
- one additional criterion from either *Body of work* **or** *Professional impact*

For each of their chosen criteria, they'll need to provide an experiential statement – up to a maximum of 250 words for each.

Presenting evidence

For their *Professional impact* statement(s), applicants are required to provide their evidence using the STAR format. Though not a formal requirement for the other two categories, it's recommended they use the STAR technique for these too.

Situation	Task	Action	Result
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What situation were you, the team, business or profession experiencing? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the impact of the situation? • What problems needed to be resolved? • What led to you specifically being involved? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What steps did you take to resolve the situation? • Why did you choose this approach? • Did you produce anything to aid resolution? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the outcome/impact of your actions? • How did you and others benefit from the outcome? • What did you learn from the experience? • How did your involvement impact the profession?

The applicant's STAR statement should begin broad before focusing on a specific and relevant example associated with the selected criterion. Progressing from Task to Action to Result, their evidence should show the clear progression of the work from A to B, reflecting the applicant's journey from before their interaction to now; it should also be measurable.

The statements shouldn't be a summary of the positions an applicant's held, as this will be covered in their CV / LinkedIn profile which they're also required to submit when they apply.

See the *Appendices* for an example STAR statement.

Examples of evidence

Here are suggestions of the type of information an application might include for the different sub-criteria. The examples provided are far from exhaustive.

Body of work

The *Body of work* category focuses on the work the applicant does or has done within the information technology profession.

- **Invention and innovation**

For this criterion, an applicant is expected to describe the invention or technique they've created and/or innovative ideas they've implemented. In addition to providing details of the invention or innovation, they must also evidence its impact. For example, the impact might be on research conducted, changes to business processes or system designs, or the purchasing or utilisation of products in their industry.

- **Entrepreneurship**

We understand that an applicant may not be able to evidence day-to-day involvement in the running of the business, charity or enterprise if they are an entrepreneur. Instead, we would expect evidence of how and why they set up the business, along with evidence of its success.

- **Responsibility**

For this criterion we expect the applicant to evidence their seniority or authority in an organisation, department, programme, project, product, process, or the design of a system. They don't need to have any direct reports. The focus of their statement should be on their autonomy, the impact of decisions they've made, and what they are accountable for in their current or a previous role.

- **Research**

An applicant evidencing this criterion could be an academic or responsible for the development of products, policies, systems design etc. Despite their background, an applicant evidencing this criterion is expected to refer to published and peer-reviewed research and state how their research has impacted the profession. Evidence of research on its own is not enough to pass this criterion – the impact is key.

- **Skills development**

An applicant evidencing this criterion could be working in education as a teacher/academic on an information technology-related subject area, or a trainer working in the profession, or a mentor/coach of others either working in the profession or wider community. An applicant evidencing this criterion is expected to relay details about their role, the skills they develop in others, number of people they have developed etc, and state how their work has impacted the profession. They may not necessarily be employed as a skills developer, but as this category is 'body of work' we'd expect skills development to play a large part in their work.

- **Consultancy**

We understand an applicant may be a specialist in their field but not necessarily directly applying those skills in practice, instead acting as a consultant to enable businesses to utilise their knowledge/skills. Therefore, the applicant's evidence should focus on how they support businesses to develop their business, systems, staff etc, in terms of information technology. For example, advancing a business's data analysis system and advising on the skills that staff need to develop in order to use the system successfully, and perhaps delivering training for those staff.

Professional impact

The *Professional impact* category focuses on the impact of the work the applicant does or has done on the profession. This could be in terms of the development of products, policies, other professionals or members of the community.

We haven't provided examples of evidence for the specific sub-criteria for this category as it varies so extensively from individual to individual. Instead, here are general areas to consider when advising an applicant on what to include and how to write their statement(s) for their sub-criteria.

- Is there explicit evidence of how the applicant is using the skill associated with the criterion in their work?
- How have they used their knowledge of the profession to influence their approach?
- Are they presenting evidence of their own work or a group effort? If a group effort, is it clear that their role involved leadership and was significant in the result?
- As an influencer¹, what activities did they undertake to resolve the situation?
- What was the impact of their activities within the profession, at either a business, policy, or people level?
 - At a business level – e.g. evidence of how the business has progressed because of their involvement, e.g. ways of working, development of staff, profit, creation of a new business or charity etc.
 - At a policy level – e.g. evidence of intended or unintended consequences of implementing the policy on either a business, national or international level.
 - At a people level – e.g. evidence of how their work has impacted people's perception of information technology, others' personal or professional development and progression, changes within society, policy development etc.
- The number of businesses or people they've developed through their activities does not need to be vast, but the specific details of what they mentored them in and the level of impact as a result should be significant.
 - For example, they mentored the CEO of a company who then changed the way they work, which led to the CEO changing an aspect of the business that involves information technology.
 - For example, they coached many low-ranking individuals working in information technology-related roles who then rose through the ranks, gaining increased responsibility, accountability and influence within an organisation.

¹ An influencer in this context is a person with the ability to influence or put in motion, at a business or people level, changes to the perception of the profession or information technology, develop the understanding of the profession or use of technology, and/or promote the importance of the profession and the embedment of information technology in work or social life.

Standing in the community

This category focuses on how the applicant is viewed within the information technology profession. They should state what they have achieved and how they've used that achievement to make IT good for society. In addition to their experiential statement, an applicant may also provide a URL linking to further evidence of their position.

- **Awards**

In addition to stating the award, the applicant should provide evidence of how gaining that reward has impacted their work activities.

- **Governance**

In addition to stating the committee or board they are part of, an applicant is expected to evidence how their involvement has impacted the work or decisions of the committee or board. This could include their involvement in offshoots of the committee or board activities, such as working groups to develop an aspect of the business or charity. The committee or board they reference can be national or international.

- **Public influencer**

An applicant evidencing this criterion may provide details of information technology-related:

- presentations they've given at large events
- an influential book or research paper they have written
- significant contributions to professional online blogs
- activities as an expert witness or arbitrator

This is not an exhaustive list.

- **Assessor**

An applicant evidencing their work as an assessor should focus on how they've used this role to impact, for example, assessment within the organisation, or decisions by a board or committee. They could refer to the number of applications or academic assessments they've conducted or the number of institutions they're the assessor for, but this should then tie back to the impact of their work as an assessor.

Appendices

You may find this additional information helpful when supporting an applicant to complete their application.

1. STAR example

Professional impact – Outreach

Within low-income areas across the Midlands both unemployment and digital illiteracy are high. Increasing digital literacy in these areas would improve the employment opportunities, but due to long-term unemployment many members of the community are not inspired or motivated to develop their digital skills.

As a qualified journalist with a PhD in Journalism from the University of London, 6 years as a Global Technology Editor authoring digital media articles for The Guardian, and a long-term resident of Corby, an area with an increasing unemployment rate, I decided to use my skills for the benefit of society.

I established the Digital Activist Network in 2009, a charity with the sole aim of increasing digital literacy in areas with low economic activity within the East Midlands. I liaised with borough and district councils to identify the areas with the highest unemployment and local businesses, JobCenter Plus and the East Midlands Chamber to investigate the basic digital skills required but often not evident in applications. Through the employment of 50 volunteers and a media campaign targeting the unemployed in north Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, I created a support and digital development network to improve employability. Through local events and community workshops, the volunteers inspired and supported individuals in basic digital skill development by focusing on areas they personally wanted help with. For example, setting up their new laptop and choosing appropriate accessibility features, uploading and editing digital photos, formatting a document etc.

18 of the 30 job centres I liaised with received positive feedback from applicants about the support they'd received from the Digital Activist Network volunteers. Some members of the community have now become volunteers for the network and some of the experienced volunteers have left the network to become full-time IT trainers. In 2012 the network received the Digital Skills Initiative of the Year award from Digital Leaders 100 and, at the same event, an employee of one of the job centres won Digital Leader of the Year and directly cited the network in their application.

2. Fellow criteria

Here are full details of the sub-criteria that sit under the three Fellow criteria categories.

Body of work

Sub-criteria	Descriptor
Invention and innovation	Inventions or innovation resulting in successful products, systems/applications, processes or practices.
Entrepreneurship	Creation of a successful information technology-related business, charity, or enterprise which benefits society.
Responsibility	Responsibility for the technical decisions taken and application of excellent practice for a significant area of information technology. For example, within an organisation, department, programme, project, product, process, or system design.
Research	In addition to providing evidence of a successful career in research, evidence should identify the impact of the work.
Skills development	In addition to providing evidence of a successful career in skills development, education and/or training, evidence should identify the impact of the work.
Consultancy	A thought leader who advises/assists organisations in/with the significant deployment, employment, use or development of information technology.

Professional impact

Sub-criteria	Descriptor
Inspiring others	Inspiring and motivating others within the industry through public engagements (speaking, writing and one-to-one).
Interdisciplinary collaboration	Building networks throughout different sectors to enhance the digitalisation, information technology and BCS agendas.
(Inter)national policy making	Supporting and/or delivering policy development relevant to information technology.
Diversity and inclusion	Being a leadership champion to promote diversity and inclusion within the field. For example, formulation of policy and/or implementation of programmes intended to improve diversity and inclusion within an organisation.
Mentoring or coaching	Acting as a mentor and/or coach to develop the next generation of leaders, peers or senior execs in information technology.

Sustainability – social or environmental	Influencing the use of technology to positively impact sustainability at a social or environmental level.
Outreach	Influential at the grassroots level of the information technology community through outreach engagement activities. Acting as an ambassador for the profession, engaging communities with low digital literacy and promoting the standing of information technology as a profession.

Standing in the community

Sub-criteria	Descriptor
Awards	Formal recognition of achievements, e.g. industry award, significant academic or corporate award, Fellow of another institute, chartered status.
Governance	Member/chair of important governing boards or committees.
Public influencer	Speaker on information technology-related topics at major events and/or influential advocate of making IT good for society, for example, through impactful content on information technology-related topics.
Assessor	An assessor for chartered or other high-level registration or membership applications for a professional governing body or institute.