

Welcome to the March 2021 *in partnership*

In this month's edition of In Partnership we focus on our March Connect Benefit theme exploring sustainability for everyone: here and now. We also focus on work relating to curriculum development, academic career progression, organisational resilience and upcoming member benefits and events.

We're delighted to host the inaugural meeting of our newly established Advance HE Senior Women's Network this month; a unique forum for senior women working in HE with shared interest in advancing gender equality. Find out more and sign up for future events [here](#).

We'd also like to thank you for taking part in our In Partnership survey. We will use your feedback to improve In Partnership going forward and cater the content to your needs.

As always we welcome your feedback. Please contact your Head of Membership with any ideas or content you would like featured.

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in
partnership

Keeping our
members updated
with the latest from
Advance HE

March 2021



Connect Benefit Series



Connect Benefit Series February

February's Connect Benefit Series theme examined the impact of Covid-19 on gender equality in HE. As the sector has responded to the Covid-19 pandemic and continues to deal with the ongoing challenges, there is a risk that insufficient time to take stock and reflect has been allowed and the knock on effect on equality in particular may mean a slowdown in progress made to date, or even worse, a regression.

What do key stakeholders feel has advanced gender equality as a consequence of the pandemic? What has inhibited or regressed it and what could the sector do differently?

Outputs included blogs, a podcast and the initial findings of our survey exploring the impact of Covid-19 responses and remote working in HE.

February outputs

Find out more and access all of the outputs

[Access here](#)



March Connect Benefit Series – Sustainability for Everyone: Here and Now

For March, our Connect Benefit Series theme “Sustainability for Everyone: Here and Now” will be based on the premise (and need) that sustainability is for everyone, both in higher education and beyond. We will address key challenges including Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and climate change, and consider how sustainability can be prioritised.

The theme will consider sustainability in higher education specifically, where the word ‘everyone’ has three applications:

- + First, INCLUSION – ‘everyone’ is intended to be inclusive.
- + Second, URGENCY – ‘everyone’ is intended as a call for action.
- + Third, ACTION - ‘everyone’ means everyone needs to act in the here and now

Outputs for this month will include a series of blogs, a live event on 15 March 10:00 GMT and a Tweet Chat on 31 March, 20:00 GMT.

Blog

In this introductory blog, Dr Patrick Baughan introduces this innovative and entertaining theme, about one of the most pressing issues facing higher education and society at large. [Read more](#)

Webinar - In Conversation with Sustainability Leaders

Join us at 10:00 GMT on 15 March for “In Conversation with Sustainability Leaders”. This webinar will provide a rare opportunity to consider sustainability in conjunction with leadership in HE. It will raise questions as to whether sustainability has remained a niche aspect of academic development and consider the premise that it needs to form a more central focus area in leadership and governance.

[Register here](#)

[Find out more](#)

Member Benefits and Opportunities

Collaborative Development Fund

As part of our 2020-21 member benefits, our Collaborative Development Fund comprising three projects under the themes of equality, diversity and inclusion in governance, education and strategy and culture, is designed to support the development of our members based on sector needs. In October 2020 we opened a call for our members to apply for funding of up to £35,000 per project. Following the call, we are pleased to announce that funding for two projects has been awarded.

Queen Mary University of London has been successful for the Education theme – ‘Developing flexible ecosystems for education that support student success: where are we now, what works and where next?’

The University of Gloucestershire has been awarded funding for the governance theme, sponsored by Perret Laver, ‘Board diversity practice project’.

A third strand of work, ‘The reshaping of higher education and research institute strategy and culture: pandemic perturbations, evolution or revolution?’ will be led by Advance HE.

The projects are due to conclude in July, with outputs available to all colleagues at Advance HE member institutions once finalised.

 [Find out more](#)

Student Partnerships in Assessment

As the higher education sector continues to navigate through the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, our Student Partnerships in Assessment global member benefit initiative, launching in April and running through to June, aims to support Advance HE member institutions around the globe to engage in conversation about getting started with embedding student partnerships in assessment.

We invite all Advance HE member institutions to engage in dialogue about assessment in higher education, with a particular focus on the benefits and challenges of embedding students as partners in the development of assessment.

Member institutions will be contacted directly by Heads of Membership for staff and student representatives to take part in a series of synchronous and asynchronous online events, discussing contemporary and diverse thought leadership about embedding student partnerships in assessment. The outcomes of these discussions will facilitate a series of outputs, accessible to all colleagues at Advance HE member institutions.

 [Find out more](#)

Leadership Insights Library: the new name for Advance HE’s Knowledge Bank

Last month’s In Partnership featured an introduction to Advance HE’s Knowledge Bank, the online library of resources on leadership and management, available to access for member organisations.

This month we are announcing the new name for this resource; the Leadership Insights Library.

The Leadership Insights Library is an online repository of resources organised around core themes of learning and development, HR tools, leadership and strategy, managing people, personal skills and projects and operations.

It contains good practice resources and toolkits covering a huge range of up-to-date guidance, approaches and latest thinking. Content is presented in a range of easy-to-access and interactive formats: toolkits, self-assessments, audio clips, quick reads, case studies, videos, infographics and long-form articles.

Content is refreshed regularly and is based on the latest research in learning and development. Users can search for content on a particular topic, or engage by browsing through the curated ‘playlists’ and specially selected features. Currently, there is a ‘spotlight’ playlist of resources on wellbeing for staff, with a range of practical tips and advice.

For access, members should log on to My Advance HE and use the ‘Leadership Insights Library’ link within ‘My Profile’ to access. For further enquiries, please email networks@advance-he.ac.uk

 [Find out more](#)





Teaching and Learning

AdvanceHE

MEMBER
BENEFIT

Tackling bias in the curriculum

The second part in our three-part series of literature reviews on unconscious bias for Advance HE members.

Bias in the Curriculum, authored by Hannah Borkin, Researcher (Mixed Methods) at Advance HE, assesses the prevalence of bias in curriculum design, content and delivery. It also includes an evaluation of good practice initiatives to help to create an evidence base of ‘what works?’ in eliminating or reducing bias.

Two themes are explored within the review - bias in medical school curriculum and eliminating bias in reading lists. Some of the recommendations for students, staff and institutions highlight that:

- + teaching on the topic of bias should be engrained and embedded throughout, and students should be offered an opportunity to co-create interventions to raise instances of bias in real time
- + a reading list review is a type of intervention that represents an important first step for academics to consider their own individual biases, and to carry out positive action in order to reduce bias in their assigned reading lists.

Hannah said, “Literature reviews researching bias within higher education remain sparse but interest in the prevalence of bias in different settings has increased over the past few years.

“This series of reviews recognises the importance of understanding how unconscious processes can influence our behaviour and decision-making. In the case of curriculum design, the available literature on tackling bias in the medical curriculum and within reading lists demonstrates that these are two distinct areas where – as a starting point - positive change can be made.”

Rethinking the pathways for academic career progression

A collection of case studies from higher education institutions sharing ideas for academic career progression.

Professor Bradley shares some insights from Academic Career Progression: rethinking pathways.

The impact of Covid-19 has changed many things in higher education over the last year. Career progression for colleagues, perhaps, taking a back seat whilst wrestling with home working (alongside home schooling or other caring responsibilities) and the move to online delivery in the short term, which then evolves to become longer term.

Colleagues will have seen the headlines “UK universities axe thousands of jobs during pandemic” (THE 8 December 2020) and “Almost 10% of Australian university jobs slashed during Covid, with casuals hit hardest”, (The Guardian, 7 October 2020). So the publication of the output of a symposium on Academic Career Progression will be a welcome read.

There are case studies where institutions have rewarded and recognised excellence in teaching within their career structures and work to create a parity of esteem between teaching and research.

There are case studies demonstrating how institutions have supported dual professional colleagues, coming in from practice with valuable authentic experience and networks, and how professional bodies recognise the need for the experience of practice within the course delivery.

Yet, the discussion still needs to be had regarding equality, diversity and inclusion within our institutions career structures.

EDI support

Advance HE works with higher education institutions to address issues of equality, diversity and inclusion

[Find out more](#)

Development Pathway

Professional development at Advance HE includes programmes, conferences and events dedicated to developing those at specific stages of their career. Our Development Pathway has been designed to provide support at all stages of your career in higher education and works for you whatever your role or the role of those you manage.

[Find out more](#)

 [Access the publication](#)

 [Access the publication](#)

Teaching and Learning continued

Expanding notions of pedagogy to empower change

Amrita Narang, Course Lead at CU Coventry, explores what it means to decolonise pedagogy with respect to curriculum, and how small changes in our practice hold the potential for bigger, visible impact, to challenge pervasive inequalities within university space.



In recent times, we have heard about decolonisation of the university space around the world. We have listened intently to podcasts, attended webinars, and read blogs to comprehend the meaning of this rather complex word, and what does it signify for academics and practitioner in higher education institutions (HEIs).

For this reflective blog, I wish to explore what it means to decolonise pedagogy with respect to curriculum, and how small changes in our practice hold the potential for bigger, visible impact, to challenge pervasive inequalities within university space.

I focus on pedagogy precisely because it equips the learner with tools for deep learning using critical reflection and examination. Curriculum, intricately linked with pedagogy, encompasses ‘what’ of the content, ‘how’ of teaching and assessing, and the ‘who’ of who teaches and who is taught. To address structural inequalities within university space, it is only rational to empower staff and students alike with the power of knowledge – of the curriculum, and about the curriculum. This will enable them to challenge the root cause of inherent inequalities and re-imagine education that is culturally and socially responsive, and inclusive.

The essence of my academic identity is to offer transformative learning and to make students world ready

with global skills. As a course lead, I play a key role in deciding the academic curriculum for the course and establish its underpinning design principles. However, I am also mindful that academic curriculum is not free from institutional curriculum, that permeates the social fabric of the university space.

Institutional curriculum is knowledge intrinsic to dominant beliefs, values, and behaviours – embedded in many aspects of the institutional life. It is tacit in nature, in such a way that one is socialised into it – through, for example, inductions, student engagement activities, classroom behaviours and negotiated expectations between lecturers and students, cafeteria conversations, student clubs and societies. Given the omni-present and pervasive nature of institutional curriculum, students, and academic staff from outside (socially, linguistically, or culturally) can easily feel either ‘warmly welcomed’ or ‘not fitting in.’

“ **One needs to acknowledge that institutional curriculum through its very nature portrays power laden social relations. It is often about what is valued, who is valued, and by whom. Such socialisation is often (perhaps unconsciously) realised through privileging those in majority, and as a result, leaving others feeling left out, marginalised, not heard or seen.**”

This in no way supports the aspiration of nurturing global graduates but on the contrary runs the danger of making those in minority feel alienated, and isolated- socially, and emotionally.

Academic curriculum, as we now recognise works within the remit of institutional curricula. It is the immersive experience of engagement of staff and students with subject knowledge, its methods, behaviours, and identity pertinent to the discipline. Academic curriculum comes to life through pedagogical tools and practices and hold the

power of transforming thinking.

The key question that emerges for us is then – what does decolonisation mean for teaching practice, and pedagogical philosophy? And second, how can it empower staff and students to question structural privileging of some and therefore leaving the rest as feeling other-ed, within the wider institutional space?

Decolonisation is an intricate and often a messy (personal and professional) journey. It has multitude of evolving meanings and interpretations, dependent on what lens and intent one adopts to view it. Decolonisation, as Jansen articulates, is about re-imagining what the alterative can look like, through critical engagement with settled and dominant knowledge.

In the UK, decolonisation is one of the many responses to address disparity in degree outcomes for students from diverse background. I hope you will concur that degree outcomes are not just a result of student performance on assessment tasks. Instead, degree outcomes are linked fundamentally to sense of belonging that students nurture with their institution space, and to the academic curriculum with which they actively engage with.

Therefore, re-thinking the academic curriculum is a pertinent step towards transforming institutional curriculum. It is imperative that critical examination of what we teach, who is teaching, and how is one taught, addresses two key questions:

- + How is the curriculum assimilating all students into the disciplines’ knowledge stance?
- + Second, are students are able to see and recognise themselves in that curriculum?

[Read more](#)

Teaching and Learning continued

Rethinking engineering education

During her keynote speech at the recent Advance HE STEM Conference 2021, CEO of the New Model Institute of Technology and Engineering (NMITE), Elena Rodriguez-Falcon, reflected on her journey to develop a more ‘authentic learning’ approach to engineering education, as we celebrate the International Day of Women and Girls in Science.

“In the UK, we know that we need almost two million engineers by 2025, but each year we observe that there is a deficit of 37,000 engineers and 60,000 technicians. If this is added to the fact that companies in the UK indicate that about 61% of the industry don’t have the confidence in engineers for advanced work and large proportion of the industries report a lack of appropriately qualified engineers, the problem is pretty big.

“If one investigates a little more, it appears that recent graduates appear not to have the skills to start working as an engineer from day one. They seem to behave as students still, hence graduate training schemes. In addition, they needed help to communicate effectively with colleagues from other disciplines, hence the pressure to develop interdisciplinary approaches.

“ So what did we do? We started a brand new higher education institute from scratch.”

She says the ambition of NMITE was to ‘disrupt education’ and embed diversity in their programmes.

“Diversity in the discipline is fundamental, because diversity of ideas only comes from diversity of communities. So the ambition was to create an inclusive environment with 50% representation of women. If 50% of the population are women, then 50% of the engineers should be women.

“Our programmes are all integrated, we don’t separate programmes into civil, mechanical etc. we integrate elements of each of those along with liberal subjects such

as ethics, sociology, history and arts. Our programmes are accelerated, three years instead of four, which is cheaper for students and we have a pipeline of trained engineers to help meet the demand as soon as possible.

“In order to create a diverse and integrated environment, we also need diverse and interdisciplinary educators. We have people who come from literature, humanities, finance, marketing and business. Crucially the emphasis at NMITE is on learning how to learn.”

Elena grew up and studied in Monterey, Mexico a large industrial city in the north of the country. After moving to the University of Sheffield she realised that engineering education was broadly similar across the globe and set about changing that.

“As most engineering students and graduates can attest, we tend to learn engineering through theory. I had the opportunity to apply that theory through a very good placement programme at the university where I studied, which was a huge boost to my employability. However, the reality is that the degree itself did not provide the employability skills that I needed so I had to acquire them externally via the placement.

“A few years after working in industry, I decided to come to the UK, where I eventually moved into academia. I found that that the pedagogical approach to engineering used in UK institutions was very similar to that I had experienced in Mexico, and I learned that that was the same all over the world.

“ This realisation inspired me to look for alternative approaches that allowed for a more realistic experience to be embedded in the curriculum. If you can’t take students into the real world, how can you bring the real world into the classroom?”

Authentic learning

Elena said she started to bring real clients, from vulnerable communities, into the classroom to try and give her students real experiential learning opportunities where they could apply their theoretical knowledge.

“What we were looking to see was if these real clients would be a good vehicle to develop real skills through experiential learning.

“We gave the engineering students the opportunity to use the theory they had learned in other subjects to develop competencies closer to doctors, for example, where you have to understand the client’s needs in the context of the problem in order to seek a solution, not only technically but also ethically, legally and economically.

“The examples that you can see from this slide are examples that come from a real customer need, and the application of the engineering skills into a solution. This undoubtedly, and I can attest, helped these particular customers, but more importantly gave the students the experiences that I was seeking to give them.”



[Read more](#)

Leadership and Development

Longitudinal report highlights the impact of Aurora, Advance HE's leadership development initiative for women.

Advance HE has published a summary report alongside the five-year Longitudinal Study of Aurora and the career paths of women in HE conducted by Loughborough University (Sarah Barnard, John Arnold, Sara Bosley and Fehmidah Munir). The Longitudinal Study explores the context of women in leadership in higher education, as well as understanding views and progression of participants on Advance HE's Aurora leadership programme.

Aurora aims to support women and their institutions to fulfil their leadership potential. The study's purpose has been to:

- + track and analyse the career pathways of women in higher education
- + explore perspectives on (and engagement with) leadership roles and activities
- + explore perceptions of confidence, aspirations, role and professional development, work/life balance, opportunities and challenges to development/progression
- + assess commitment of women to their role, their discipline, their institution and their own professional development.

A total 3796 women contributed to survey data, of whom 3423 participated in Aurora either before or during the study. Out of the 3796 respondents, 47% were professional services staff and 53% were academics, with 86% of respondents working full-time.

Over four time periods (pre Aurora, three to six months post Aurora, 15-18 months, and 3+ years post Aurora), Aurorans were asked to what extent the perceived effects of Aurora had increased as a result of participating in the programme.

The strongest perceived effects related to the motivation to seek out leadership roles ('I seek out leadership roles'), the social skills of leadership ('I demonstrate the people skills needed for leadership roles') and proactive career management ('I engage in leadership at work that is not part of my description/role). Three or more year's post-Aurora, 68%, 67% and 64% respondents agreed with these statements respectively.

The report points to cultures and barriers to progression that still persist 3+ years post Aurora:

“ I openly challenge systems and or culture of my workplace” - 36% agreed

“ I managed my work-life balance effectively” - 22% agreed

Disaggregating the data across the protected characteristics, it was found that at both three-six months and 15 to 18 months post-Aurora, BAME respondents were significantly more likely than staff from other ethnic groups to say that Aurora had led them to challenge the workplace systems and/or culture.

Comparing the career development of those who had participated in Aurora with those who had not, three to six months after Aurora, 18.6% of Aurorans said they had been promoted compared with 7.1% of the comparison group. Similarly, 25.1% of Aurorans reported receiving an accelerated or discretionary increment compared with 16.1% of the comparison group. Three years or more after Aurora, Aurorans were again more likely than the comparison group to report receiving an increment in the last 12 months. Qualitative responses were overwhelmingly positive, with many highlighting increased self-confidence in abilities and capabilities.

Recommendations in the report include:

- + Institutional leaders and managers should consider supporting, or continue supporting, the Aurora programme by sponsoring women academics and professional services staff to participate
- + Institutions should consider strategies to ensure the skills, confidence and ambition gained from the programme are fully integrated into the workplace. Proactively create ample opportunities for women to disseminate and implement their learnings back into the institution and enact their leadership potential.
- + Ensure that women working part-time or with caring responsibilities continue to be considered for leadership roles, as the extent to which they seek out leadership roles and responsibilities is similar to that of women working full-time.
- + Institutions should commit to an ongoing review of gendered workplace practices and politics that are hampering women's efforts to benefit from the learnings of the Aurora programme.
- + Women who participate in Aurora should ensure that the 'collective consciousness' continues beyond the programme, perhaps by setting up institution specific Aurora 'graduate' groups.
- + While the benefits of Aurora evidently endure beyond the end of the programme, consider ways to organically 'grow' these learnings further, for example by focussing on career self-management.

 [Find out more](#)

Leadership and Development continued

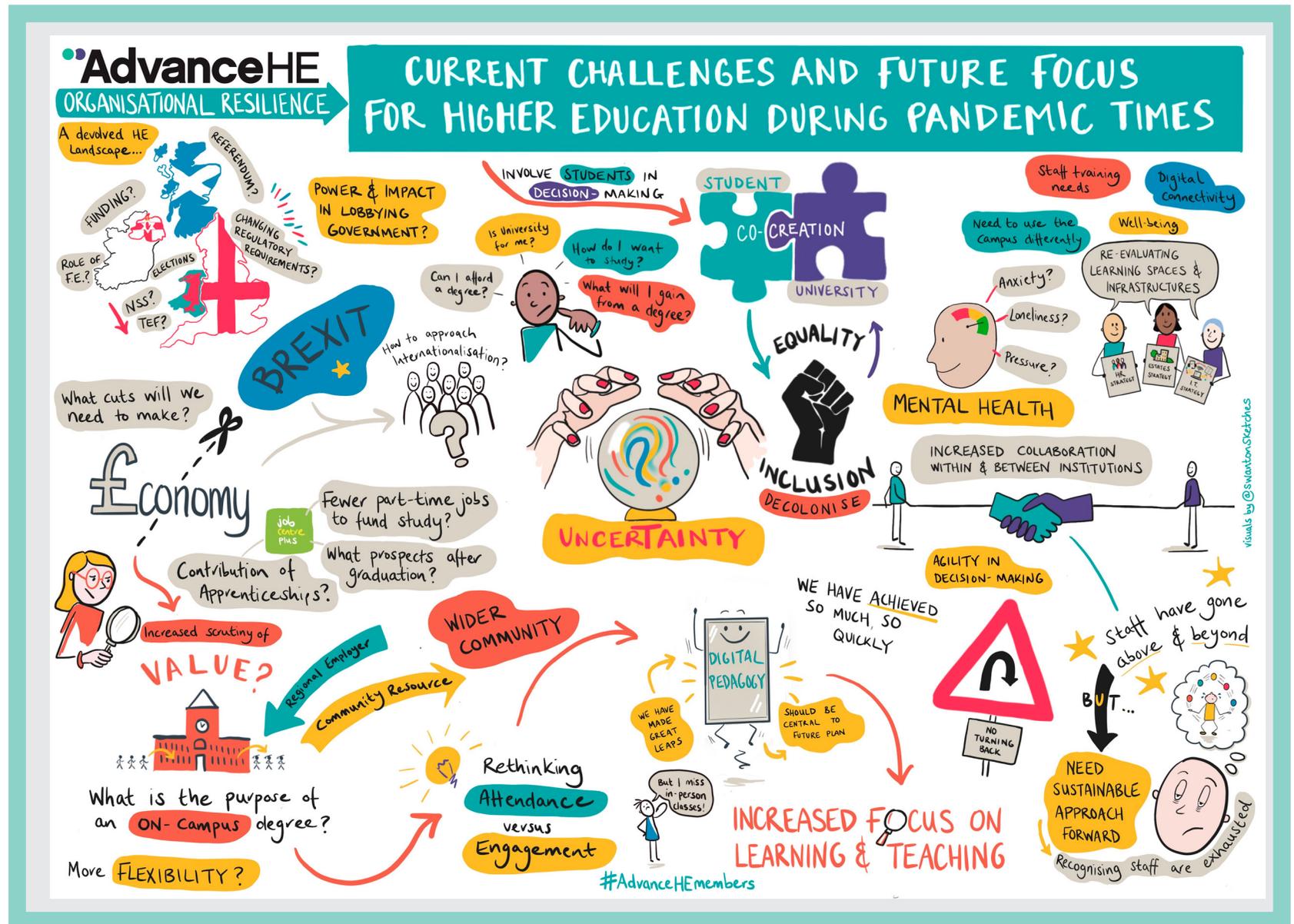
Organisational Resilience'

This Sketchnote captures the key themes from an Advance HE session in November 2020 that focused around 'Organisational Resilience in pandemic times'. It summarises the key challenges and areas of future focus identified by senior leaders from our member institutions in the devolved nations (Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland).

We wanted to share the Sketchnote more widely with our global membership as we hope that it offers a useful resource for colleagues to embed into strategic discussions and planning within their own institutions.

We hope that it offers an engaging and useful prompt to consider questions such as:

- + Which of these issues are relevant for your own institution?
- + Which of these would you prioritise in the short, medium and long term?
- + Which of these issues need further emphasis in your strategic plan?
- + Which of these issues have you discussed with your students?
- + Which of these issues have you discussed with your staff?



Download

Leadership and Development continued

Looking through the digital lens

As universities being to reflect on the lessons of the pandemic, Jisc's Head of Higher Education, James Clay reflects on how we may want to start to look through a digital lens on our strategic priorities.

The pandemic crisis has provided universities with serious challenges and required creative thinking to provide solutions. Universities have needed to act at pace and scale. They've needed to do this whilst staff and students are coping with yet another lockdown, social distancing and continuing restrictions. All of this whilst trying to navigate a highly charged political landscape, with often conflicting advice and guidance from central government. Despite the positive news of the rollout of vaccines, it will be sometime before things get back to normal, and we don't yet know what that normal will be.

One aspect of education that has gained more prominence during the emergency response to the pandemic is the importance of online and digital in responding to the situation, and the use of technology to meet the changing needs of students and staff. There have been issues with hardware, software, remote technical support, and planning a blended hybrid curriculum that ensures a quality student experience, but they have, by and large, been overcome through the support of our teams across a range of professional services and with the experience and knowledge of all our staff.

Knowing that digital has been critical to dealing with the challenges of the pandemic, the question now remains: how and what role will digital play in the post-pandemic strategic priorities of the university?

There are two key questions facing universities?

Does the strategy still meet the needs of the university in this new, changing and uncertain landscape?

What role does digital play in helping universities achieve their [new] strategic aspirations?

There are various ways in which you can respond to these questions, you may want to create new strategic priorities, which reflect the new landscape in which universities will operate. Some universities will want to consider creating a digital strategy, or giving their existing one a major overhaul. A question that you may want to reflect on, do universities need a separate digital strategy? There are challenges with having additional strategies that are an addition to the core strategic priorities, and with more strategies in place it is sometimes easy for things to fall between them. Additionally, the provision of a new strategy, with new digital priorities, may be seen as some kind of extra or addition to what staff are already doing. The end result is that the digital strategy is often ignored or left to one side. If you are tasked with writing a digital strategy, you could write it in isolation, but prepare for it to be a low priority for people higher up. Also expect people in other directorates or departments to ignore it as they focus on their own strategies.

At Jisc, we argue that in order to get stronger "buy-in" by stakeholders there is a need to apply a digital lens to all strategies. What we mean by this, is reviewing and reflecting on the strategic priorities in turn and exploring and explaining how digital can be used to enable and achieve those priorities. This moves the emphasis away from a focus on a technology or a tool and onto the core focus of the business.

If you consider a strategic goal such as this one:

"We will respond flexibly to the challenges and opportunities ahead. Flexible modes of study will support our students to succeed and allow them to engage with a greater range of opportunities in education, extra-curricular activities and work experience."

You can start to see how a range of digital and online technologies can enable this to happen. The importance of digital platforms to enable flexibility of access to learning. Using online social platforms to increase engagement in extra-curricular activities.

The lens is made up of different aspects that need to be considered when applying digital to existing and intended structures.

It is necessary to identify which element will be looked at in digital contexts - for example, a particular teaching practice. Different digital options should then be explored to gain a thorough understanding of the range of possibilities. The benefits and risks of each possibility should be carefully weighed before deciding to deploy. As with all change, it is important to reflect and evaluate the nature and impact of the changes caused by the incorporation of digital.

The digital lens approach can enable effective and transformational behaviours to emerge by helping staff to understand and develop their capabilities and confidence in the context of their own work. The results can include an improved status quo and the identification of new goals for individuals and their organisations.

 [Read more](#)

Advance HE, Universities UK (UUK), Jisc and EmERGE Education are working to "create a roadmap for a digital shift in HE for 2020/21 and beyond, setting out the steps needed to harness the potential of digital technologies and deliver an outstanding education experience."

[Find out more](#)

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Update on the Tackling Racism on Campus project

The SFC funded, Advance HE led projects 'Tackling racism on campus' and 'Tackling the underrepresentation of ethnic diversity in the workplace' are progressing well. The suite of assets developed by the steering group in the first project are currently part of a pilot programme where six institutions (four from Higher Education and two from Further Education) took part in three workshops. The first two focused on anti-racist pedagogy and the third showed the delegates how the assets could be used in their institutions. Pending feedback from institutions, the assets will be rolled out across the tertiary education sector at the [EDI Conference](#) which takes place on 16 March.

The second project has issued a call for an expression of interest to explore the interventions to improve ethnic diversity in the tertiary sector, to gather literature and carry out interviews, and to take forward recommendations for further investigation. The second output from the short term expert working group focuses on the creation of a micro-site following Talat Yaqoob's [Pass the Mic](#) model to encourage BAME academics and professional services staff to put themselves forward to be part of the recruitment, selection and interview panels.

The Anti-Racist Curriculum Project

The Anti-Racist Curriculum (ARC) Project presents an exciting opportunity to further capitalise on the current sector wide commitment to tackle racism in the Scottish HE and FE sector. This will build on the excellent work of the SFC funded 'Tackling Racism on Campus' project and involve a strategic collaboration between Advance HE and the next enhancement themes programme of activity (managed on behalf of the sector by QAA Scotland).

Embedding consideration of race equality in university and college curricula is a core part of a 'whole institution' approach to race equality and addressing the BAME degree awarding gap. It is a significant component of the Race Statement that the Race Project Steering Group is co-developing with the Scottish sector, underpinning the Race Declaration the sector has collectively signed up to. The ultimate aim of the project is to provide support and guidance to the Scottish Tertiary Sector on how to develop an anti-racist curriculum via a 'getting started guide' with shared vision and recommendations for the future.

ARC March Update

Following on from the official launch of the ARC project in January which included a [webpage](#) and our hugely positive inaugural meeting between the executive group and our 24 [working group members](#) from across the tertiary sector, the project moves into its first phase 'Where we are?' in February, which is focused upon research and scoping in collaboration with our tertiary colleagues, experts and practitioners in this area. It is critical for us to understand our current context and this exploration will provide an initial deep-dive including desk and interview/focus-group based work led by our Associate Researcher Mia Liyanage and Project Lead Melanie Smith. We aim to capture an in-depth and holistic picture of key existing resources, literature and information around anti-racist curriculum work in further and higher education in the UK (especially Scottish) landscape. The next step will be to capture current ARC practices and identifying enablers and barriers to this work.

 [Find out more](#)



Scottish Funding Council
Comhairle Maoineachaidh na h-Alba

If you would like to get involved with the ARC project or receive regular updates, please contact Project Lead Melanie Smith at melanie.smith@advanc-he.ac.uk

The **Anti-Racist Curriculum (ARC) project** sees Advance HE and QAAS working together with the tertiary sector to identify and curate existing resources, learn from current practice and recognise best practice both in Scotland and beyond.

The ARC project is an important addition to the new sector-wide Enhancement Theme, **Resilient Learning Communities** (2020-23), which focuses on meeting the changing needs and values of an increasingly diverse student community and a rapidly changing external environment.

Listen to a new podcast on structural race inequality with Mia Liyanage, London Programme Officer at CoachBright, Binna Kandola OBE, Senior Partner at Pearn Kandola, and Khadija Mohammed, Senior Lecturer at the University of the West of Scotland and Chair of the ARC project share their views on the impact of categorisation and labelling.

[Listen now](#)

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion continued

Promoting teaching excellence for all

With increasing discussions across the sector in relation to the equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) agenda and learning and teaching recognition, Dr Hardeep Basra from De Montfort University shares her approach to enhancing the recognition of teaching excellence for all, but in particular, underrepresented groups.

Higher education institutions (HEIs) have long been reporting on the status of learning and teaching (L&T) recognition, and in the UK and many countries regularly do so through an annual statistical return. These metrics help institutions to assess their current status and help set associated strategies and approaches to drive L&T recognition further. I, myself, write annual reports examining the impact of our Advance HE accredited schemes and analyse data on L&T achievement. However, recently I have been critically reflecting on what data am I reporting on, and more importantly, what data I am not reporting on. Too often reporting requests focus on top level data, concentrating on headline figures without examining L&T recognition across the institution at a granular level. Reasons for this are twofold; one, the availability and accessibility of data and secondly, detailed analysis of L&T recognition amongst specific staff groups is not regularly requested let alone scrutinised. In my role as the institutional lead for Advance HE accredited schemes, and in my role as the Co-Chair of the BAME Staff Network, I became increasingly interested in understanding L&T recognition in relation to the EDI agenda and this blog shares my commitment to promoting and recognising teaching excellence for all.

Getting hold of the data

Getting hold of accurate data (or as accurate as possible) was really important in understanding the current state of play at De Montfort University (DMU) and helping inform what actions, underpinned by wider strategy and policy,

were required. The data does exist. HEIs are required to return data, in order to meet statutory requirements to HESA on the L&T recognition of their teaching staff. A lot of work has been done at DMU to enhance the reporting quality, accessibility and reliability of data. For me this has been critical in shaping the approach taken at DMU to meet its strategic KPTs in L&T, with a focus on enhancing opportunities for underrepresented groups.

A key change in strategic direction was shifting future L&T recognition targets to the responsibility of Faculties away from the central Directorate, which supports staff gaining L&T recognition. A collaborative approach is the way forward. I have been working with senior management in Faculties in helping them formulate and operationalise plans to increase levels of L&T recognition. Faculties will now set their own targets, which they will report on and be accountable for. Having the granular data has really focused minds and has resulted in more targeted interventions.

What does the data show?

The data indicates at DMU L&T recognition is below sector average. It also shows significant differences across Faculties, and across Departments within Faculties. There are higher levels of L&T recognition across full-time permanent staff, compared to hourly paid lecturers or part-time staff. There is on average 15 percentage points difference between staff holding a HESA L&T recognised award and those holding a category of Advance HE Fellowship, and this is across all categories of staff examined. It also showed no real disparity amongst BAME and White staff in terms of overall L&T recognition, which was pleasing to see, though there was variation across Faculties. Moreover, data on gender showed marginally higher rates of L&T recognition amongst females compared to males.

After reviewing HESA data, I went on to also review other forms of L&T recognition at DMU, namely National Teaching Fellowship (NTFS), Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence (CATE), DMU's internal Teacher Fellow Scheme and Associate Professors Learning & Teaching. The data across all schemes of L&T recognition showed there was a significant underrepresentation of BAME staff as well as gender disparity in favour of females. Further examination of who had applied over the last three years disclosed a lack of diversity in applications. BAME staff were not applying for such accolades, and with the exception of the DMU Teacher Fellow scheme, male staff were also not applying.

Also, Senior Fellowship data showed there was a lower proportion of BAME staff within this category when compared to the overall proportion of BAME staff. Although numbers of Principal Fellowship are very low at DMU, there are also no BAME staff within that category. Thus, data indicates higher accolades of L&T recognition were predominately occupied by white women and thus I wanted to encourage underrepresented groups to apply.

 [Read more](#)

Find out more about Advance HE's work to support institutions to tackle inequalities and implement strategies to promote and enhance equality across all protected characteristics.

[Find out more](#)

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion continued

LGBT+ History Month 2021 at the University of Bradford

The University of Bradford is celebrating LGBT+ History Month through a series of talks and panels. Marian Hilditch, Deputy Academic Registrar and chair of the LGBT+ Network talks about the challenges and importance of putting together these fully virtual events.

“Dear Highly Respected HE Professional with a 15-year career, would you like to come to our panel to talk about liking men?”

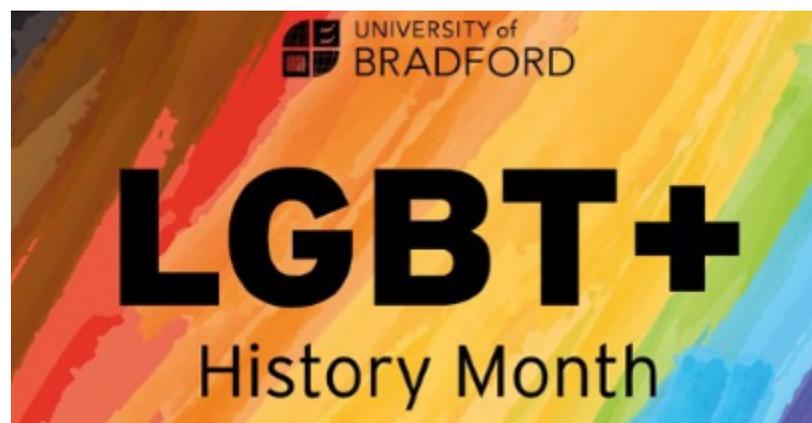
...is not an email anyone really wants to write. Especially if you're writing it to your old boss.

Talking about your sexuality is on nobody's top 10 topics in a work environment (unless relevant to that work environment) and so putting yourself out there as an LGBA+ person is quite a big ask. Talking about your gender identity or, even worse, your transition, can feel like too big a personal sacrifice for the sake of visibility. Yet the LGBTQIA+ community understands that in order to never talk about it again, we have to have a lot of conversations about it now.

EDI at Bradford

The University of Bradford prides itself on social inclusion: it has a very racially diverse student population, a woman Vice-Chancellor (plus Chancellor and Chair of Council), two of the 25 black women professors in the UK (tragically, noteworthy), two members of the Executive Team openly discussing their disabilities and yet, when it comes to LGBT+ representation there is... a gap.

Perhaps we should not be that hard on ourselves, there are, after all, very few senior leaders in HE that openly identify as LGBTQIA+. Last I checked there were two VCs, one of whom came out in an email to staff & students after Bi-visibility Day in 2017. “Making the decision to send the



email to all those thousands of people was quite worrying and stressful,” he said, but he understood it was the right thing to do.

“Universities are complex, multicultural ecosystems, with staff and students from around the world, some of whom come from countries where homosexuality is illegal. Many come from countries where gay marriage is not recognised. Those from two blocks down from our lecture theatres may come from families where being queer is not talked about. A lot of those students are LGBT+. We have a responsibility to let them know that they are not alone, that they are accepted and that they can be themselves within our walls (physical or virtual).”

LGBT+ History Month is only one of the ways we can do this: we should continually ask how to make sure LGBT+ inclusion is more embedded into our institutional strategies all year round. For right now, it's our one big gesture.

LGBTHM21 at Bradford

The difficult thing about putting History Month together this year, was not being able to organise on-campus events. The easy thing about it, was being able to do everything online! No need to pry rooms away from the cold hands of panicked module leaders! Speakers are suddenly all

available! Don't have to budget for travel expenses! And yes, we are all dealing with Zoom fatigue, but people who would not have normally come to a campus event can now watch it online more discretely.

With a different hat, I have been on the SROC committee for 7 years now, organising the annual conference, and what makes it successful is that it always has its ear to the ground. Sure, the committee has views on the direction of travel, but it is our practitioners that drive the content. Similarly, with History Month, I knew what notes we needed to hit, but it was the staff network and UBU (our SU) that ultimately shaped the programme.

Team Bradford

We are lucky to have members in our LGBT+ staff network from different corners of the rainbow and of different ages and genders which give us a wealth of perspective. The staff network-led part of the programme grew organically from what was of interest to the members.

At the same time, UBU had their own, very different, ideas. We were talking about Section 28, parenting and STEM and they were thinking inspirational speakers and role models. We were working with twitter and they were working with Instagram. They were very pro-active in getting us all into weekly meetings. Our History Month opening session was a joint event.

We were also lucky to have supportive media and events teams who worked with the staff network to get our event pages set up, get our branding to the VC for sign off and get us publicising in record time. We have also been lucky with our assigned Equality & Diversity Co-ordinator who is part of the LGBT+ Network and is supporting us throughout the month.

[Read more](#)

International Spotlight

Advance HE delivers Teaching Skills Masterclass to academics from across Vietnam

Advance HE has delivered a Teaching Skills Masterclass (TSMC) programme to academics in Vietnam, generously funded by the World Bank. The programme, hosted by the Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) at Vietnamese-German University (VGU), brought together 30 academics from institutions across Vietnam to develop and enhance their online teaching practices.

High quality digital learning is a key focus for global development at Advance HE, which has only been amplified by the global pandemic and the impact it has had on face-to-face learning. The programme hosted by VGU was a fantastic opportunity to reach academics from across Vietnam and for them to discuss and share their ideas.

The programme, delivered in November 2020, focused on several key aspects of online teaching during the pandemic including the design of effective activities, assessment and feedback, and learning in times of change. It also involved presentations from a range of guest speakers, including e-learning consultant Burnie Burnell and VGU's own Dr Mark Spittle and Winfrid Messmer.

Dr Spittle, Director of CETL, commented:

“The participants have all returned to their respective universities, inspired to start using the techniques and tools so competently demonstrated by the Advance HE team, and to share their new-found knowledge and skills with their colleagues.”

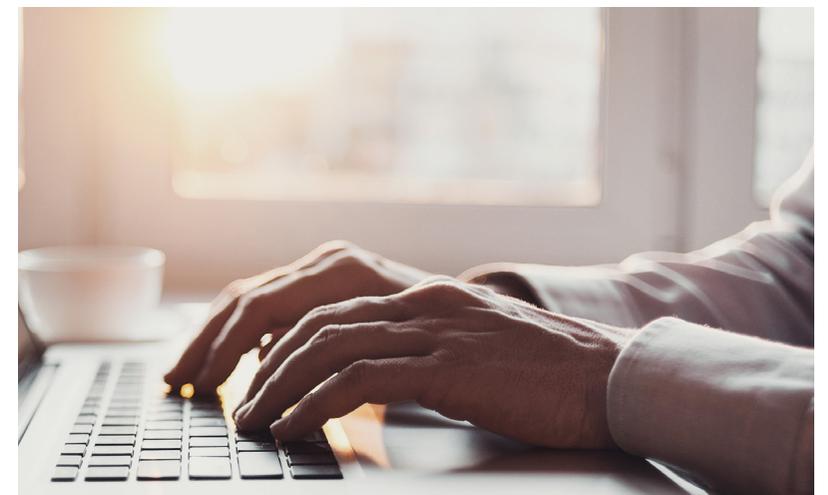
Feedback from the participants was excellent, many of whom had recently been forced to teach online for the very first time, and all of whom have since been able to promote the latest and most effective online teaching practices at their respective institutions, to the immense benefit of university students throughout Vietnam.

Advance HE's Assistant Director, International, Becky Smith said of the programme:

“With the shift to online and to ensure they can continue to deliver outstanding student learning experiences many HE teachers worldwide have needed to rapidly alter their teaching practice.

Advance HE was delighted to support VGU in their efforts to assist their own, and, generously, those from other institutions, as they adapted to the online environment by providing new tools, techniques and approaches to teaching via this Masterclass.”

Vietnamese-German University was founded as recently as 2008, following a partnership agreement between the Vietnamese and German governments aimed at bringing German programmes of study to Vietnam. The university offers Bachelors and Masters degrees across a range of subjects focusing on engineering and natural sciences.



Find out more about our Teaching Skills Masterclasses and how they could support staff development at your institution.

[Find out more](#)

Governance

Independent review of the HE Senior Staff Remuneration Code

The Committee of University Chairs (CUC) has published an independent review of the HE Senior Staff Remuneration Code.

The CUC commissioned Advance HE to undertake an independent review of the Higher Education Senior Staff Remuneration Code, in order to establish if it remains fit for purpose.

The Remuneration Code is voluntary and to be used on an 'apply or explain' basis. Its primary audience is HEIs that are members of CUC, however it is also intended to be applicable and of value to others.

Commenting on the review, John Rushforth, CUC Executive Secretary, says, "This is a robust and encouraging report. We are pleased that the Code is so widely used and has had a positive impact. The report makes helpful suggestions on further improvement which we accept, because it's important that we all work to improve public understanding of what we do and the contribution HE makes to societal and economic growth."

Victoria Holbrook, Assistant Director, Governance and report co-author, says, "The Remuneration Code has an important role to play in ensuring confidence in higher education governance. Our review sought the views of stakeholders across the landscape including Chairs of Remuneration committees, government bodies and secretaries and clerks, together with the input of an external reference group.

"We found that overall the Code is widely used by its intended audience and broadly considered fit for purpose by all. That said, practice and sentiment has evolved since the Code's creation in key areas such as fairness, stakeholder engagement and transparency which merits further consideration by CUC, working with partners, to enhance the Code's impact."

 [Find out more](#)

Governance enhancement services

Governance Effectiveness Reviews

In the current environment, effective governance of higher education institutions has become a high profile issue. Every governing body of an HEI in the UK (not including Scottish HEIs) should undertake a review of its effectiveness every four years. In Scotland governing bodies are expected to review their own effectiveness every year with an externally facilitated evaluation every five years. The [CUC Code of Governance](#) (article 7.11, p.26) suggests that 'Many governing bodies find an external perspective in this process useful'.

Drawing on our network of experts, we provide an external perspective through our [Framework for Identifying and Supporting Governing Body Effectiveness Reviews in HE](#), developed in partnership with CUC. Read the [case study](#) from our Governance Effectiveness Review at Newcastle University. Advance HE has delivered governance effectiveness work across the world, including UK, Ireland and Australia.

Academic Governance Reviews

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the HEI's ability to deliver learning and teaching will increase attention on academic governance and assurance and its role in navigating the transformations needed for years to come. Drawing upon our extensive pool of governance experts we work with you to review [academic governance provision](#). Our approach is based on our Framework for Academic Governance and covers areas such as; the maintenance of academic standards, defining and monitoring academic quality and continuous improvement in quality of provision.

 [Find out more about our Governance services](#)

Governance news alerts

Our Governance News Alerts are designed for Governors, University Secretaries and Clerks and all those supporting or interested in governance in HE. To stay up to date with the latest governance news, [sign up to our Governance News Alerts](#).

Governance News Alert 4 March 2021

HM Treasury Budget 2021: Protecting the Jobs and Livelihoods of the British People

[Read more](#)

Governance News Alert 4 March 2021

"The Governor View" – new widening participation figures highlight competing performance measures

[Read more](#)

Governance News Alert 22 February 2021

Committee of University Chairs (CUC)/Advance HE Independent review of the HE Senior Staff Remuneration Code

[Read more](#)

 [Find out more](#)

new content + publications



New Chair of Advance HE's Board of Governors appointed

Stephen Marston, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Gloucestershire and a serving member of Advance HE's Board, has been appointed Chair of the Board.

Mr Marston takes over from Sir Nigel Carrington, Vice-Chancellor of University of the Arts London, who is retiring. Mr Marston's appointment follows a rigorous process and was ratified by the Advance HE Board, 17 February 2021.

"I am delighted to be appointed Chair of a first class Board which I believe is working very effectively with Advance HE's Executive group. Huge strides have been made since Advance HE was formed in early 2018 and now there is a great opportunity for it to claim its place as the HE sector's leading development agency, working with our members in the UK and overseas to support them to achieve their goals. I know I speak for all Board members in saying how excited we are by

Advance HE's progress to date, and the potential we see to keep strengthening the support services we offer for members, particularly in teaching and learning, governance, leadership, and equality, diversity and inclusion. This impressive start has, in no small part, been due to the commitment of my predecessor, Sir Nigel Carrington, and I look forward to building on his outstanding leadership.

Alison Johns, Chief Executive, said, "I am personally extremely grateful to Nigel for his invaluable guidance and support as Chair of the Board, particularly through our merger and as we established ourselves as a single agency. We are very much looking forward to working with Stephen and are delighted with his appointment. I thank him and the entire Board for the precious time they commit in supporting us.

[Read more](#)



Guidance for captioning rich media

The Disabled Students' Commission has published new guidance to help universities and colleges improve support for the digital experience of disabled students.

[Access the publication](#)

Alistair McNaught from McNaught Consultancy, one of the co-authors of the new guidance, explores the issues of communicating technical standards to non-technical people to ensure that organisations meet the needs of the Public Sector Bodies Accessibility Requirements.

[Read the blog](#)

Understanding Structural Racism in UK Higher Education: an introduction

A new, practical resource is now available to support Advance HE members tackle structural racism in UK higher education.

[Access the publication](#)

The public value of higher education

Alastair Work, Senior Associate at Advance HE and co-facilitator of our Strategic Leadership Programme, looks beyond the internal mechanics of the higher education sector to ask the question "who else cares?"

[Read more](#)

Decolonising identity: what's in a name?

Advance HE publishes the first in a series of podcasts exploring structural race inequality

[Listen now](#)



Shifting emphasis from content to skills

Following her contribution to the recently published 'Employability: breaking the mould' case study compendium, Dr Maria Romero Gonzalez discusses how academics should consider moving from a content-based curriculum to one based on skills.

[Find out more](#)

Three key tips to get started on the path to achieving Senior Fellowship

Gordon Leonard, TNE Partnership Manager, University of Stirling, shares his approach to a successful Senior Fellowship application.

[Read more](#)

Dates for the diary

Conferences + Events

HEPI/Advance HE webinar: What does value for money in higher education look like in a pandemic?

25 March 2021

This webinar will explore how Covid-19 will impact students' perception of value for money, if blended learning meets the needs of students, and how universities provide their usual services for students at distance.

[Find out more](#)

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Conference 2021

16-18 March 2021 - Virtual

With the theme of 'courageous conversations and adventurous approaches: creative thinking in tackling inequality', this conference will create space for reflection and capacity-building and will explore hidden and emerging EDI issues.

[Find out more](#)

Sustainability Symposium: Facing Forward with Sustainability: Principles, Progress and Partnership

23 March 2021 - Virtual

This event will provide the opportunity for colleagues to share and discuss innovations in and research about progressing sustainability initiatives and education, in pandemic and post-pandemic higher education.

[Find out more](#)

Get involved at our Conferences and Events

We have a number of open calls for papers which provide opportunities for colleagues to present their work to peers from across the sector including the Curriculum Symposium and the [Disability Colloquium](#). As well as sharing your ideas to inspire others, taking part in an Advance HE conference or event provides an invaluable opportunity for professional and personal development.

[Find out more](#)

Save on EDI Colloquia bookings

Delegates can save 14% on the collective cost of the three following equality, diversity and inclusion colloquia when booked together. Find out more about the

- + Race Equality Colloquium: Critical approaches to race data in higher education: 20 April 2021
- + Gender Equality Colloquium: Advancing gender and sex equality through research design: 11 May 2021
- + Disability Colloquium: 15 June 2021

Offer ends 20 April.

[Find out more](#)

Save on selected Symposia bookings

Delegates can save 14% on the collective cost of the three following teaching and learning symposia when booked together:

- + Sustainability Symposium: Facing Forward with Sustainability: Principles, Progress and Partnership, 25 March 2021
- + Employability Symposium 2021: 3Es for Wicked Problems, 22 April 2021
- + Curriculum Design Symposium 2021: Post-pandemic curriculum, 8 June 2021

Offer ends 24 March

[Find out more](#)

Save on Innovation in Teaching Practice workshop bookings

Delegates can save 12% on the collective cost of the three following Innovation in Teaching Practice workshops when booked together:

- + Creativity in blended teaching, 13 April 2021
- + Gamification, 25 May 2021
- + Balancing tensions: Identifying impactful and effective pedagogic practices for a volatile post COVID-19 world, 17 June 2021

Offer ends 13 April.

[Find out more](#)

 [Find out more about conferences and events](#)

Dates for the diary

Development Programmes

Spotlight Series for Senior Strategic Leaders (Series II)

6 May 2021

This second series has been put in place to focus on four core, topical challenge areas: positive engagement, inclusion, conflict and creativity. These half-day, impactful sessions will support senior leaders to reset, re-energise, and rejuvenate as the sector moves into the 'next normal'. Book all four sessions for a discounted rate.

[Find out more](#)

Strategic Leadership Programme

Starts 22 April 2021

Build the confidence and skills to lead, engage and influence across your team, institution and the sector. The deadline for application submissions is 19 April 2021.

[Find out more](#)

Governance Professionals in HE

12 April 2021

A flexible and practical development programme for HE staff who lead and support corporate and academic governance. The programme will offer delegates a topical and flexible approach to professional development, combined with an opportunity to understand and share collective problems with peers across the sector.

[Find out more](#)

GDP: Leading the Board for new and aspiring chairs

14 April 2021

Delivered with the support of the Committee of University Chairs, Leading the Board is designed to support those who are new to leading, or aspire to lead, a governing body or committee of a HEI. This event will provide an opportunity to discuss and examine the role of the Chair in leading the board and the importance of creating a boardroom culture which enables effective governance.

[Find out more](#)

Senior Women's Leadership Programme

7 May 2021

Senior Women's Leadership Development Programme is one of our women-only programmes designed specifically for women in senior positions in HE to help them take the next step up or extend their role, profile and impact.

[Find out more](#)

Fellowship Application Builder

10 May 2021

A short online, self-directed course of six units designed to provide support and guidance to develop your application for Fellowship. Each unit is self-directed and can be undertaken at your own pace.

[Find out more](#)

Research Team Leadership

7 July 2021

Research Team Leadership in Changing Times is a two-day online course designed to develop your skills as a research team leader with particular reference to supporting research leaders and their teams in these changing times.

[Find out more](#)



[Find out more about our development programmes](#)