

# Welcome to the May 2021 *in partnership*

In this month's edition of In Partnership we focus on our member benefit theme for April and May of transforming organisations: from student to board. We also explore the Student Partnerships in Assessment project, the Top Management Programme longitudinal report and upcoming member benefits and events.

Advance HE is seeking a number of members for its **Strategic Advisory Groups** which actively engage Advance HE's members in shaping the activity and future direction of the organisation. The groups ensure that the organisation is responsive to members needs and helps build sector confidence and trust in Advance HE, whilst identifying opportunities to create future services that meet member's needs. The terms of reference for each of the Strategic Advisory Groups can be accessed along with the person specifications [here](#). To apply, please submit a CV and covering letter of no more than two sides through our **application portal stating** which Strategic Advisory Group you are applying for within your covering letter. Please share with any colleagues who may be interested in applying.

*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

May 2021

# Connect Benefit Series



## Connect Benefit Series April and May – Transforming Organisations: from student to board

For April and May, our Connect Benefit Series theme ‘Transforming Organisations: from student to board’ looks at transforming organisations from the perspective of different stakeholder groups, and considers how our HEIs can bring about authentic strategic and cultural change.

Many institutions are telling us that they need to review, stress test or simply start again with their strategic aims in the light of Covid-19’s disruption. Although on the whole their purpose is still intact, how the strategy is delivered might now need to look and feel very different. Engaging all stakeholders in visioning and owning the transformation required, aligning this with values, aids the holistic realisation of change and delivery of the strategy.

Outputs for this month include a series of blogs, a visioning activity, a virtual sandpit event, a Tweet Chat on 28 April and a live webinar on 17 May.

 [Find out more](#)



### Blog - Transforming Organisations: from student to board

After a turbulent year with rapid change, organisations need to review their purpose, vision and strategy - Kim Ansell introduces our Connect Member Benefit Series for April and May in this blog.

[Read the blog](#)

### Visioning Activity - Don't tell me, show me

The theme will start with a visioning activity that we hope all stakeholders will engage in, from student to board. Most visioning activities, if used at all, ask individuals to visualise the future in words, so this is an opportunity to imagine your future vision in a different way.

#TransformingHE

[Find out more](#)

### Connect Benefit Series - Transforming Organisations: from student to board webinar

Join our upcoming webinar 17 May where senior leaders from across the sector will be sharing their experience and story of transformation and their reflections on engaging all stakeholders in transformation in the Covid world and beyond.

After a turbulent year with rapid change, organisations may want to review their purpose, vision and strategy, considering what gaps have materialised and engage with stakeholders to ensure they are delivering what matters. As part of this they should also identify what they are proud of and understand their successes so that they can communicate and build on these.

Changing the narrative in organisations and having transformative conversations to support strategic change is an essential component.

[Book your free place](#)

# Member Benefits and Opportunities



## Student Partnerships in Assessment


Our Student Partnerships in Assessment programme is now underway, supporting the development of assessment models and practices within higher education institutions.

The programme outputs will comprise a series of resources including guides and podcasts from students and sector colleagues, which share best practice for getting started with embedding student partnerships in the development of assessments in higher education.

Outputs include:

- + **Recorded live sessions:** The 90-minute live webinars hosted by Dr Cathy Bovill in April and Professor Kelly Matthews in June will be recorded.
- + **High-level report:** We will publish a high-level report of the programme summarising the primary focus and outcomes of discussion over the three-month member benefit.
- + **Podcasts:** 'In Conversation' podcasts featuring Dr Cathy Bovill and Professor Kelly Matthews discussing the theme of student partnerships in assessment with expert voices internationally.
- + **Guidebook:** We will publish a brief guidebook detailing a set of core principles and practices for getting started with Student Partnerships in Assessment.

Please register your interest in being contacted about these outputs.

 [Register your interest](#)


## Tackling structural race inequality in higher education

Meeting the challenge: supporting senior leaders in conversation, change and accountability in addressing race

Meeting the challenge: supporting senior leaders in conversation, change and accountability in addressing race is the fourth strand as part of our initiative on 'Tackling structural race inequality in HE', which runs for members throughout 2020-21.

This strand of work is designed to support senior leaders to develop their readiness to tackle current issues regarding race. It will explore the skills and confidence needed to navigate issues of race and racism with sensitivity, insight and humility.

Following the event for senior leaders on driving whole institutional change on race equality which took place on 19 April, a written output will soon be available to expand on what was learnt from the event. Register your interest to be notified when the written output is published.

 [Register your interest](#)

## Take part in our survey on flexible learning as part of the Collaborative Development Fund project

As part of the Collaborative Development Fund project, Developing flexible ecosystems for education that support student success, Advance HE and the Queen Mary Academy at Queen Mary, University of London are surveying members to learn more about the range of flexible learning approaches that higher education institutions have adopted to provide opportunities for all. There are three surveys to take part in, each aimed at different audiences. We would very much appreciate your participation in these.

The outcome of this work will help establish the current state of flexible learning approaches in higher education and findings will be disseminated widely for the benefit of the sector.

The surveys will remain open until 14 May 2021.

 [Participate in the survey](#)



# Teaching and Learning

## Universal Design for Learning: an antidote to digital poverty

Kevin L Merry is a Senior Fellow and lead for academic development at De Montfort University. As the founder of the UDL UK and Ireland (UDL-UKI) network, he writes how applying Universal Design for Learning principles to the delivery of teaching sessions can provide a useful starting point against digital poverty.

### Positives of virtual learning

Covid-19 has caused a sudden shift away from the classroom that has changed higher education dramatically over the last 12 months. Born out of an emergency need to keep things going during lockdown, learning has been shifted online, initiating a mass adoption of virtual teaching, whereby learning is delivered remotely via various digital platforms and tools.

Despite the abrupt pivot to virtual learning and teaching, many teaching staff across the HE sector have reflected positively on the benefits gained from the shift online. For example, the need to change teaching habits, engage with new technology, and think differently about student engagement has forced many staff working in HE to step out of their comfort zone and develop their digital teaching skills. For students, time and space barriers have been removed, allowing learning to be more accessible, more flexible, and more supportive of improved digital communication and collaboration skills.

### Barriers to virtual learning

Although there have been some clear benefits to the virtual learning and teaching pivot, it has also further exposed some of the inequalities experienced by students when engaging with online learning. A critical issue is digital

poverty. According to the Office for Students in England, digital poverty can be defined as an inability to fully interact with the digital world. From a learning perspective, this can happen for a variety of reasons. These reasons centre on a lack of access to the digital infrastructure items which are considered as core to virtual learning. These are:

- + appropriate hardware
- + appropriate software
- + reliable access to the internet
- + technical support and repair when required
- + a trained teacher or instructor
- + an appropriate study space

If access to only one of these items is problematic then a student is said to be experiencing digital poverty. As teachers, the extent to which we can ameliorate access problems to the above items is somewhat limited. However, there are some important steps we can take to support students that may be experiencing digital poverty.

### Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

There is a high level of learner variability among the diverse groups of students that make up modern universities. Learner variability represents all of those things that may influence a student's engagement with, and approach to their learning. As such, it can be useful to think of the sources of variability as barriers to effective learning.

Some sources of learner variability are obvious. For example, a dyslexic student for whom processing and remembering information is a challenge, would engage with and approach learning in a very different way to a non-dyslexic student. However, some sources of learner variability are less obvious, but nonetheless must be

planned for. In this regard, digital poverty is a significant source of learner variability when it comes to online learning, because it provides a potential barrier.

Fortunately, UDL is an approach to learning and teaching that is based around planning for learner variability by incorporating a variety of options to allow it to be accessible and inclusive for all students. Reflecting an awareness of the unique needs of each student, UDL supports the creation of a customisable learning experience by removing barriers from the learning environment.

Barriers to learning are removed via the application of the UDL principles. Two of these principles in particular could be potentially critical in eliminating the negative influence of digital poverty.

### Engagement and representation

The principle of engagement encourages teachers to present learning in a variety of ways to support the maintenance of interest and motivation for learning, since students will differ markedly in this aspect. For example, spontaneity and novelty will highly engage some students, while others will be disengaged, or even frightened, by such approaches, preferring a set routine. Some students might prefer lone working, while others may prefer to work with peers.

The principle of representation encourages teachers to present information to students in a variety of ways because each will differ in how they perceive and understand information presented to them. For example, some students may understand information more efficiently and effectively through visual or auditory means rather than printed text. Furthermore, multiple representations of content allow students to make connections within and between concepts, supporting an enhanced transfer of learning.



## Teaching and Learning continued

### My journey to Principal Fellowship - Dr Tenia Kyriazi

Upon receiving her Principal Fellowship at Advance HE, Tenia Kyriazi, Deputy Director Academic Operations and Head of Law and Politics at Middlesex University Dubai, reflects on her journey to Principal Fellowship and discusses its impact, looking forward to the future.

My journey to Principal Fellowship was challenging but fulfilling, solitary but collegiate, demanding but productive. Most crucially, the process of working towards and successfully completing the submission of the application was itself a remarkable professional development exercise.

Here are some reflections on my own journey, the benefits of the Principal Fellow recognition, some tips for those who consider applying and my future goals.

I decided to pursue PF pretty much as soon as I was awarded my Senior Fellowship back in 2016. The whole process made me realise my passion for teaching and learning and for mentoring others. It acted as a trigger for me to broaden the scope of my practice and its impact to the institutional level and beyond.

I applied for the role of the University's Teaching and Learning Committee Chair and, in this capacity, I had the opportunity to get more involved in formulating teaching and learning policies and staff professional development programmes. The UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) were set as a framework of every initiative. So, the work towards PF started right after my Senior Fellowship was awarded four years ago and it drove, to a great extent, my practice and interventions in the last four years.

Nevertheless, it was not until I started putting the application together that I engaged with the remarkable professional development benefits of the process.

What was challenging? The endless reflection, the critical evaluation of my initiatives and their mapping against D.4 descriptors. At the same time, it was fulfilling to realise how far I had come, how much invested I had been in my practice and the incredible change that my efforts had

brought about in my institution and beyond. Most crucially, it was satisfying to watch my colleagues' impressive growth under my mentorship and the collective and individual upskilling that was achieved through the professional development programme I developed.

Working towards the Principal Fellowship is a solitary process, in that there is a great deal of personal reflection, commitment and work. Having said that, I have enjoyed the collegiality and support that I received during the process.

On one hand, I was fortunate to be mentored by a wonderful mentor who was patient and persistent, supportive and detail oriented. It was really supportive to have her by my side through the process, as she kept inspiring me with her constructive feedback and was constantly asking challenging questions - those that would solicit the right answers for my submission. A big shout out of gratitude for Sally Bradley!

On the other hand, I was surrounded with colleagues and friends who championed my application, gave me feedback, references and support. I am deeply thankful to my powerful network! All in all, I feel I worked really hard but the whole process was instrumental in developing and further enhancing my engagement with and commitment to the UKPSF.

Are you a highly experienced professional, able to provide evidence of a sustained and effective record of impact at a strategic level in relation to teaching and learning, as part of a wider commitment to academic practice? Principal Fellowship may be for you. [Find out more](#)

Are you thinking of applying for Senior or Principal Fellowship? Writing Retreats offer 1:1 peer coaching and expert analysis, the space and time to process and craft your narrative for your submission. [Find out more](#)



A few tips for those who are considering applying for Principal Fellowship:

- + Set your professional practice and intervention in the framework of the UKPSF.
- + Ensure that your institution is ready for the changes that you are about to launch - it is important that there is fertile ground for your interventions to grow and bring about benefits.
- + When you are ready to put together your submission, make sure that it is at a time that you are able to focus on this task and minimise other distractions.
- + Consider taking a mentor – they will keep you on the right path and they will provide support and constructive feedback.
- + Make sure that you have a good support network to trust and rely on - they will offer valuable support and the right platform for your interventions.

# International Spotlight

## 10,000th Fellowship awarded by Advance HE outside the UK

Advance HE has recently awarded the 10,000th Fellowship outside the UK. The milestone was reached in late March and there are now 10,280 Fellows recognised across all four Fellowship categories (at the time of writing). Of the 10,280 awards, there are 208 Principal Fellows, including Dr Tenia Kyriazi of Middlesex University Dubai, 2,113 Senior Fellows, 5,320 Fellows and 2,633 Associate Fellows, as well as 47 Indigenous Associate Fellows.

In 2011 there were 659 Fellows recognised internationally, and the number has grown exponentially in the ten years since. The growing recognition of the scheme has led to the number of awards almost doubling in the last two years alone.

Fellows can be found across the globe and the recognition shows a commitment from the individual and institution to high quality teaching practices, a key part of Advance HE's higher education development services. Australia has the highest number of Fellows outside the UK, with 4,725, followed by Thailand, the UAE and Bahrain, and there are recognised Fellows at institutions from Fiji National University to Utah Valley University in the USA, showing the amazing reach of the scheme across the globe.

Fellowships are awarded to applicants who demonstrate their teaching practice conforms to the UK Professional Standards Framework. They can be awarded through direct application to Advance HE or via an accredited programme. Programmes accredited by Advance HE give institutions the power to award Fellowships to their staff directly following completion of the course. Advance HE also delivers programmes at institutions such as the Certificate of Learning and Teaching in Higher Education

(CLTHE), following which participants are encouraged to apply for Fellowship.

Advance HE recently commissioned independent research into the impact of accreditation, with the report identifying benefits including raising the profile of learning and teaching, encouraging cross-institutional collaboration, underpinning career progression for education-focused staff, developing effective educational practices and stimulating engagement in professional development and scholarship.

Advance HE's Head of Membership (International) and Associate Fellow, Ian Hall, said:

“We are delighted to have reached this fantastic milestone, which shows that high quality teaching and learning is right at the top of the list of priorities for institutions across the globe, as it is for Advance HE.

Fellowship has proven benefits, across all categories, for both individuals and institutions. All of the benefits ultimately result in a better experience for students which is after all, what we are all here for.”

The four Fellowship categories reflect the wide-ranging teaching practices that take place across the global higher education sector, from those who have a partial role in supporting teaching to senior professionals with evidence of longstanding strategic impact at their institution and in the wider sector.

Fellowship demonstrates a personal and institutional commitment to professionalism in learning and teaching in higher education. Across four categories, from Associate to Principal, Fellowship provides individuals with recognition of their practice, impact and leadership of teaching and learning. Find out more here.

[Find out more](#)

Advance HE has published independent research on the impact of institutional accreditation and its contribution to the professionalisation of teaching and learning in higher education.

[Access the report](#)





# Leadership and Development

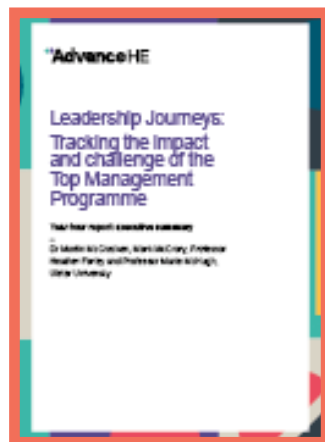
## Longitudinal report highlights the impact of TMP

An independent longitudinal study of Advance HE's executive leadership programme, Top Management Programme for Higher Education (TMP), highlights benefits for participants in leadership identity over comparator groups.

Advance HE's TMP HE is a development programme for executive leaders in higher education which has been running in varying forms since 2000 and now has over 900 alumni, both in the UK and internationally.

In 2016, Advance HE commissioned researchers from Ulster University to conduct an independent longitudinal evaluation of the TMP. The evaluation tracked the impact of TMP on participants over time and measured whether the programme achieves its intended aims: to increase leaders' self-awareness, leadership identity, confidence, competence and impact as an executive leader.

The evaluators used innovative methods including surveys, qualitative interviews and story-based evaluation, and used a comparator group to compare results with leaders who had not participated in the TMP programme.



The evaluators found that participation in TMP had clear positive developmental outcomes for participants, particularly in the longer-term as participants evolved their leadership building on the programme outcomes:

- + When participants were asked about leadership identity a year after they had completed the programme, it was shown to have increased 13% overall. The comparator group of HE leaders who would have been eligible for TMP but had not yet participated increased by 5% over this 18-month period
- + Leadership confidence increased by 9% a year after completion of the TMP. In contrast, leadership confidence within the comparator group remained unchanged
- + The biggest increases in both identity and confidence were found a year after TMP completion, reinforcing the importance of reflection in practice, and exercising the experience of TMP while in role
- + In terms of overall competence, participants across each of the TMP cohorts reported a 5% increase overall, whereas competence for the comparator group increased by just 1%.

Elsewhere in the report the authors pointed to the in-depth interviews which clearly illustrated how alumni valued the impact of their TMP experience and how it provided: “opportunities to critically reflect, with support from coaches and peers, and how an environment conducive to supporting clear introspective learning was created.” (Report authors)

The report authors also emphasised that one of the most useful aspects of the programme was its ability to bring participants from a range of different backgrounds and leadership roles together and provide a forum to make collective sense of the increasingly complex issues faced by senior leaders in HE. They noted how virtually all

interviewees extolled the power of the impact groups formed during the programme, and how these small action learning style groups acted as a catalyst for enhanced learning and development. Linked to this, another strong finding was the beneficial nature of the connections made during the programme and how they helped to reinvigorate networks and erode feelings of isolation, which is an increasingly common problem faced by leaders when they move to more senior HE positions.

When the evaluators delved deeper into these issues, they found that impact groups presented alumni with a ‘safe space’ to discuss and confront complex and wicked problems and to test out potential solutions amongst supportive peers and facilitators. When data from qualitative interviews was analysed, it became increasingly clear, that finding such a safe and secure place was vitally important for leaders who often work in messy and politically charged environments. Comments made by alumni also showed that having the opportunity to interact with like-minded leaders in the sector or ‘test stuff out with peers’ as well as ‘step back and look at what happens in other universities in another environment’ was extremely beneficial.

“It’s more than just your average leadership programme, I think it develops a sense of community about leaders and leaders to be, and it also helps you to develop a much greater sense of self and of identity as a leader.” (TMP Alumni)

“... it was an opportunity to compare approaches, my values base with other people and recognise commonality but also to better appreciate where I was different and the strengths and weaknesses of that”. (TMP Alumni)

[Read more](#)

## Leadership and Development continued

### Return to Campus: leading back better

Doug Parkin, Principal Adviser for Leadership and Management at Advance HE, reflects on the current return to campus challenge and what it may mean to lead back better in the emerging environment for higher education.

With immediate apologies for the dreadful play on the classic Presley lyrics (Return to Sender, 1962), but as the return to campus happens or continues across higher education how can leaders start to address the unknown? There is both a colossal ongoing management challenge – and this has been the case with numerous gear shifts throughout the Covid-19 pandemic – and alongside this a profound question of leadership engagement.

A big part of leadership is creating energy and focus around the things that matter, sometimes through direction, sometimes setting the pace, and sometimes through collaborative and participative engagement. It is not one thing. You can't hang leadership on a single peg, and it is dangerous to even try. Studies have shown that successful engaging leadership uses a collection of distinct styles in unison and that this should be a function of strategic choice rather than personality (Goleman, 2000). All of that said, and following the extraordinary and tragic 12 months that we have collectively experienced, firstly what matters now, and secondly how can that be progressed in a climate of fatigue-fuelled fragility?

#### Whose normal is it anyway?

New normal – next normal – back to normal – what is normal? The language of normality has been an interesting conceptual journey in itself over the last year. For some the pandemic landscape brought about by Covid has asserted a fearful normality that would have been unimaginable previously, such as those forced to shield in almost

complete isolation. A theatre of cruelty has played itself out in so many aspects of people's lives. And within higher education the upturned expectations and experiences of students and staff have been part of this drama.

Reflecting back to the early months of the pandemic, for some there was almost a sense of excitement in the words 'new normal'. Perhaps at last here was a driver strong enough to displace the status quo in a good way, and a new order would emerge. Then came a more reasoned way of seeing things as unfolding chapters, both unpredictable and yet somehow inevitable, and the term 'next normal' took hold. And as fatigue has intensified in the last few months the more familiar phrase 'back to normal' has been heard increasingly, as a yearning for everything that we have lost has grown in people's hearts. This could be termed coalgia, an affectionate desire for life as it was before the virus.

This actually reflects a fairly natural series of collective psychological responses. The heroic response to a significant crisis is followed by a honeymoon of community cohesion before disillusionment and even grief takes hold. It is then a cautious journey of upward steps, reviewing and reimagining, and working through the trauma to the post-crisis future. In some way, and in some sense, getting back to normal. Models of this kind even include anniversary triggers of the type we are experiencing now, one year on.

Set against this journey of transition, it is useful for leaders to appreciate two things. Firstly, that those things which are truly fundamental will always reassert themselves. Secondly, the importance of enduring purpose and core values.

As an example of the first, human beings, like just about all mammals, are fundamentally social creatures, and linked to this learning is above all else a human relationship. Strip away the relational aspect of engagement and all you are

left with is dry transactional processing: we give, we get, we walk away. Whilst this may work for a while with some basic exchanges, it is nowhere near enough for leading the complexity involved in research and education. Where successful this involves a depth of intellectual and emotional investment from both individuals and the collective. So, whilst virtual working and learning has served us well to get through the pandemic perturbations of the last 12 months it has not been sufficiently rich or relational to satisfy our natural human yearning to connect. Leaders will need to work closely with their community of colleagues and students to re-establish these important human bonds.

On the second point about purpose, well, purpose is the point! Without it there is no basis for collective engagement and truly interdependent work and learning. "Purpose—not strategy—is the reason an organization exists," according to Christopher Bartlett and Sumantra Ghoshal (1994: 88) and "its definition and articulation must be top management's first responsibility". Without such an effective and enduring articulation of purpose, along with the associated core values that enable its expression, there is no organisational basis for deeper connections. At this stage in the 'return to campus' story good leaders will instinctively know that the re-expression of purpose may be everything.

 [Read more](#)

To support senior strategic leaders during these turbulent, challenging, uncertain and time-pressured months, Advance HE has been running a series of short, focused, high-impact Spotlight development sessions.

[Find out more](#)



# Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

## Addressing barriers for STEM students and staff with disabilities

New research commissioned in the UK by the Royal Society examines the experiences of staff and students with disabilities in STEM. On behalf of the Disabled Students' Commission, Lori Frecker, the Royal Society's Diversity and Inclusion Programme Manager, highlights key findings from two recently published reports.

Students and staff with disabilities are currently under-represented across science, technology, engineering and maths ('STEM'). The Royal Society commissioned two reports to try to find out where and why under-representation is occurring, and identify practical action that could be taken to address the causes.

Analysis of Higher Education Statistics Authority data (HESA) in the UK provides a detailed picture of the changing numbers of students and staff with disabilities in STEM between 2007/08 and 2018/19. It shows that, despite huge growth in the overall number of students with a known disability, the proportion of those declaring physical disabilities hardly changed over this period. A significant disparity between the proportion of students declaring disabilities and the proportion of staff doing so is also highlighted.

### A complex picture

At a quick glance, the findings on students look positive. The proportion of STEM students with known disabilities has more than doubled, from 7.5% (12,585 students) in 2007/8 to 15.5% (33,530 students) in 2018/19. This suggests that STEM subjects are appealing to students with disabilities.

However, breaking down this statistic shows a more complex picture. The overall increase is being driven by an exponential rise in the proportion of students declaring

learning differences and mental health conditions. From 2007/8 to 2018/19, the number of first-degree STEM students reporting mental health conditions rose from 675 to 8,695 – a 1,184% increase. The number of first-degree STEM students reporting a learning difference went up from 6,500 to 12,000 in the same period – an 84.7% increase. This upward trend also occurred in non-STEM subjects, and likely reflects greater awareness of, and improved support for, students with learning differences and mental health issues at universities.

Over the same period, however, the proportion of students with physical disabilities has hardly changed, and in some instances, has actually decreased slightly. For example, the number and proportion of STEM students who are blind or have a serious visual impairment has decreased from 0.2% (285 students) in 2007/08 to 0.1% (270 students) in 2018/19. Students who are deaf or have a serious hearing impairment made up 0.3% of STEM students in 2007/08 (470 students) and 0.3% in 2018/19 (590 students). Despite improvements in assistive technology and student support, considerable barriers clearly remain for students with disabilities who wish to study in STEM.

### What about STEM staff?

The situation is different when looking at STEM staff. While the proportion of STEM academic staff declaring disabilities has increased over the time period (from 2% in 2007/08 to 3.8% in 2018/19), compared to students, the data shows a much smaller percentage of STEM staff with disabilities. In addition, the data shows decreasing representation at each major career transition stage in STEM. We know that the percentage of people with a known disability in the general population increases with age, but academic staff with a disability are less represented at each level of seniority.

The reasons for the differences in the proportion of disabled staff and students is not clear from the data. The Society commissioned the Careers Research and Advisory

Centre (CRAC) to investigate these questions. CRAC completed an extensive review of available literature, analysed the HESA data for staff, and carried out interviews with disabled STEM staff to investigate the barriers to scientists declaring their disability and what could be done to overcome them.

CRAC identified various barriers to declaring disability for STEM staff, including fear of stigma or discrimination, lack of clarity about the process for obtaining reasonable adjustments, and few role models with disabilities for early career scientists. Several factors appeared to have a positive impact on declaration rates, including institutions providing clear definitions of disability and detailed information about available adjustments.

### Breaking down barriers

Supporting scientists with disabilities across STEM is a key priority for the Royal Society and its Diversity Committee. Developing a greater understanding of where under-representation is occurring among students and staff is one vital step in identifying practical action to address barriers to participation.

Among the Society's other work in this area, we have produced a series of case studies of scientists with disabilities. These aim to address the lack of role models by highlighting accomplished individuals who have had disabilities during their careers.

 [Read more](#)

Find out more about the [Disabled Students' Commission](#)

[Disability Colloquium: Improving support for disabled staff in higher education](#) The [Disability Colloquium](#) on 15 June will offer insights and solutions into supporting students and staff with a disability in HE.

# Governance

## Academic governance fit for the future?

Professor Paul White on why academic governance should evolve as we start to move towards our post-pandemic education future

The Covid-19 pandemic has thrown up a number of issues around academic governance in all types of educational establishments, from primary schools to universities. Most of the time governance is routine – using established frameworks to help decision-making, to gather evidence on outcomes, to identify areas for improvement, to monitor actions, and to provide assurance to governing bodies, given their duties towards the Office for Students or other regulators. But there is nothing routine about the pandemic. Academic activities of all kinds – from induction sessions to assessment; from everyday lecturing, tutorials and seminars to field classes; from placements, projects and dissertations to PhD supervisions – have been transformed in any number of ways.

Innovation has been taking place at a rate rarely seen before. I recently met, on my daily exercise walk, the head of a major engineering department who shared his view that the pandemic had acted as a catalyst for changes in educational delivery in his department that probably should have been introduced some time ago but for which there was until now no urgent need. I think many of us will recognise that. On the whole, then, we should be energised by the changes that have been made and look to build upon them further. Yet I want to make the case for a context-driven, nuanced approach across our portfolios, which means academic governance may need to evolve further still to be truly effective.

I am concerned that with media focus centred largely on areas such as fee rebates, calls for reduced charges for places in residences for which students are paying rent but

which they are being advised not to use, and problems with on-line delivery to students from digitally-poor backgrounds other issues are being missed. The implications of the pandemic reach much further into academic portfolios than concerning the ‘standard’ delivery models for ‘standard’ young, full-time undergraduates. This means that the questions that academic governance systems need to ask about the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of educational opportunities need to consider a very wide range of issues.

Has the quality of education been upheld in disciplines such as Botany, Archaeology, Geology and Architecture where field work and site visits have been replaced by digital alternatives? Have students in Engineering, Chemistry and Microbiology been able to achieve the same skill levels as expected despite not being able to obtain the full laboratory-based practical and project experience required in subject benchmarks? Have the steps that have been taken to replace language immersion abroad for students of Spanish or Mandarin been effective in developing their linguistic and cultural fluency?

“ We know that the proportion of ‘good degrees’ awarded in 2020 was significantly higher than might have been expected on a trend line, yet the answers to questions about the quality of the education many students are now receiving could prove troubling to universities and colleges seeking to assure a wider world of the appropriateness of their response to the pandemic and the maintenance of standards. The role of the academic governance system in providing the evidence in nuanced, context-specific ways – clearly and transparently – is therefore of utmost importance.

 [Read more](#)

## Understanding and assuring academic outcomes and the student experience

10 June 2021

The event is specifically designed for Chairs and all governors who wish to understand more about how they can assure the quality of education and the student experience given the changes in approaches to teaching and learning as a result of Covid-19.

[Find out more](#)

# new content + publications

## Factors affecting students' intentions to undertake online learning

Greeni Maheshwari, a lecturer at RMIT University Vietnam and a Senior Fellow, shares her research on factors affecting students' intentions to study online.

[Find out more](#)



## “Working in education means constantly adapting and improving what you do”

Laura Minogue, Senior Lecturer in Academic Practice and Programme Lead, PgCert in Academic Practice and Fellowships Programme at the Centre for Teaching Excellence & Student Success (CTESS), St Mary's University, shares her experience of gaining Senior Fellowship.

[Find out more](#)

## Mirrors and reflection – the key to student success?

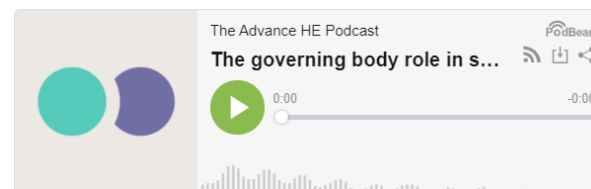
Lisa Taylor, Associate Professor in Occupational Therapy and Associate Dean for Employability, University of East Anglia shares her insights on reflection as the key to employability and student success.

[Find out more](#)

## The governing body role in stakeholder engagement

In this Advance HE podcast, part of our theme of transforming organisations: from student to board, Kim Ansell, Senior Advisor at Advance HE talks with John Stanhope, Chancellor and the Chair of the board of Deakin University about corporate governance and the board's role in stakeholder engagement particularly in the context of strategic transformation.

[Listen now](#)



## Daring outreach during risk averse times

Benita Percival and Beka Avery discuss delivering meaningful 'lab based' widening participation initiatives virtually.

[Access the publication](#)

## Swiss Education Group wins 'approval' for global education certificate

Internationally-celebrated schools specializing in hospitality, business and culinary arts – “meticulous in aligning programme to the PSF.”

[Find out more](#)



## Embracing intersectionality to interrogate and action equality, diversity and inclusion in teaching and learning

Anuj Kapilashrami, Professor in Global Health Policy & Equity at the University of Essex, shares her research on advancing EDI by tackling intersecting exclusions and oppressions.

[Find out more](#)



## Advance HE commissioned to design impact evaluation framework for student mental health and wellbeing

Working with Student Minds, the UK's student mental health charity, on the University Mental Health Charter Programme.

[Access the publication](#)



# Dates for the diary

## Conferences + Events

### Best Practices for Online Learning in Life and Health Science Programmes

13 May 2021- Virtual - Free event

This webinar, a partnership between Advance HE, the Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education and Health Professions Education at the University of Zimbabwe, will examine 'Best practices for online learning in life and health science programmes'.

[Find out more](#)

### Enhancing Practice: Athena Swan UK Networking Event

26 May 2021 - Virtual - Member event

This Athena Swan Networking Event is a fantastic opportunity to engage with colleagues across the sector, make connections and share learning and insights.

[Find out more](#)

### Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Conference: Radical and Creative Partnership Working

18 May 2021- Virtual

This one day conference, organised by the Mental Wellbeing in Higher Education Expert Group in collaboration with Advance HE, will interest anyone who works with or supports students. The conference will also be of interest to staff with strategic roles, academic staff, and those who develop policy and practice relating to mental health and wellbeing on campus.

[Find out more](#)

### Innovation in Teaching Practice: Gamification 2

24 May 2021- Virtual

These workshops have been created to provide practical support in an interactive way to assist you with implementing policy and new innovative teaching practice developments at module, programme, departmental or faculty level.

[Find out more](#)

### Leading Student Engagement in Times of Crisis and Transformation: Student Engagement Conference 2021

26 May 2021- Virtual

New for 20-21 and focusing on student engagement, this conference will focus on the engagement of students in all aspects of their higher education, from the 'classroom' to extra-curricular activities including leadership and governance.

[Find out more](#)

### Challenging privilege and the 'danger of the single story

27 May 2021- Virtual

This virtual workshop aims to deepen understanding of the barriers to equality, diversity and inclusion that exist in higher education through an examination of how majority group privilege reinforces structural and cultural inequalities.

[Find out more](#)

### The Next Steps for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: Advance HE's Inaugural Conference in Ireland

10 June 2021- Virtual

The first Advance HE conference in Ireland will focus on EDI priorities for Irish higher education. The conference will provide an opportunity for delegates to consider the varied aspects of EDI as they relate to embedding EDI in institutional strategies and ensuring implementation across the institution.

We are currently inviting colleagues to submit an abstract for either a presentation or a workshop before noon 10 May 2021.

[Find out more](#)



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

# Dates for the diary

## Development Programmes

### Spotlight Series for Senior Strategic Leaders (Series II): A Spotlight on Inclusion 25 May 2021

Our Spotlight Series for Senior Strategic Leaders is designed to turn the spotlight on a range of topical development challenges for senior leaders in this ever-changing world. Each spotlight session will have its own clear focus, and those who wish to embark on a journey with us across the whole series can do so at a discounted price.

The second event in the series will give delegates the opportunity to discuss the leadership balances that resonate in their context, review the impact of rapid change, and consider strategies to enhance inclusion in key challenge areas.

[Find out more](#)

### Governance Professionals in HE programme

15 June 2021

This 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 and engage in collaborative problem solving. It includes some asynchronous study as well as presentations, opportunities for group discussions and exploration of issues, plus a dedicated cohort area for resources, ongoing discussions and problem sharing/solving. There will be two core sessions for all participants plus two additional optional sessions.

[Find out more](#)

### Fellowship Application Builder

21 June 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](#)