



The Association of Heads of University Administration

Leading with impact

THE PROFESSIONAL SERVICE DIRECTORS' PROGRAMME



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Introduction

Those working at Director level are required to demonstrate expertise and deliver effectively in their functional areas, while aligning their activities with the academic landscape and contributing to the wider, ever-changing organisational agenda. As well as strategic intelligence and the ability to 'read' the political environment, they require confidence in communication and rapport building, and considerable self-awareness.

This programme has been designed to enhance and develop the existing leadership skills, knowledge, experience and mindset of early-career Directors and Heads within higher education professional services, to achieve greater personal impact and influence.

Programme overview

Through a range of tailored activities including individual sessions, action learning and whole group workshops featuring specialist guest contributors, participants will explore what's needed to become more effective in their roles from several different perspectives.

Learning experiences will be interactive and experiential, enabling participants to work with live issues and real challenges in readiness for applying them in practice. This approach, together with the safe and confidential environments created both online and in-person, will allow individuals to refine their skills, test and challenge their thinking, and feel confident to learn from mistakes as well as good practice.

Programme objectives

As a result of the programme, participants will have:

- Greater understanding of the knowledge, interpersonal and leadership skills and attitudes required for further success in their role and to achieve greater personal impact and influence.
- Explored leadership through various lenses: self, teams, in the context of the academic landscape and wider organisation, and leading pan-institutional strategic initiatives.
- Developed themselves in the moment through practical application, experimentation, reflection and direct feedback.
- Greater self-awareness of personal style and impact, as well as appreciation of difference.
- Clarity of thinking about areas of strength and development needs.
- Developed a diverse network of colleagues from across the sector for ongoing collaboration and inspiration.

Who is this programme for?

Early-career Directors and Heads of professional services who have been in role for 1–3 years. It is open to both those who are new to higher education and those with experience of the sector.

I have extended my network of contacts in the HE sector and gained a deeper understanding of issues across all business areas in HE.

Janet Peden
Ulster University

What the programme includes

Spread over 14 months, the programme's combination of in-person and online experiences amounts to a total of eight days. Dates and further details are summarised below.

Key components of the programme include:

- Welcome event to introduce you to your programme colleagues and prepare you for your learning journey together and an opportunity to celebrate your achievement at the programme end.
- An individual coaching session with a qualified coach at the start and end of the programme to explore and review your professional development.
- An individual Team Management Profile¹ and Click 360 Report² providing personalised feedback on work preferences and how colleagues experience your leadership style.
- A two-and-a-half-day residential event at Edgbaston Park Hotel designed to enable you to develop individually while connecting and building networks together.
- Four participant-led, themed learning sets offering facilitated reflection and sharing of wisdom and experiences to engage you in making progress on real challenges. In-person Action Learning Sets to be hosted by a participating institution, location to be confirmed after the residential programme
- A one-day mid-programme workshop focused on exploring and understanding the academic landscape, including panel and café-style interaction with guest speakers from a range of academic disciplines, roles and institutions.

¹ The Margerison & McCann Team Management Profile is a unique individual and team development tool. It gives personal feedback based on extensive research into what creates personal success and high-performance teamworking.

² The Click 360 Report is produced from an online feedback questionnaire that describes behaviours common to a successful leader. Completed by the participant and 7-10 work colleagues, data is processed and presented anonymously in a comprehensive report.



Programme sessions & dates

2024

10 January	14.00 – 16.00	Welcome session	 Online
w/c 26 February	Two hours	Individual 1-2-1 session	 Online
9 – 11 April	13.00 – 16.30	Residential event, Edgbaston Park Hotel	 In-person
8 May	09.00 – 13.00	Action learning set 1	 Online
3 July	19:30	Group dinner	 In-person
4 July	09.00 – 17.00	Action learning set 2, location tbc	 In-person
11 September	19:30	Group dinner	 In-person
12 September	09.00 – 16.30	Workshop in London	 In-person
6 November	09.00 – 13.00	Action learning set 3	 Online

2025

15 January	19:30	Group dinner	 In-person
16 January	09.00 – 17.00	Action learning set 4, location tbc	 In-person
w/c 10 February	Two hours	Individual 1-2-1 session	 Online

How to apply

Entry to the programme is on a competitive basis as places are limited. All entries will be assessed and places awarded on the basis of the quality of the application and supporting letter.

Complete the online [Professional Service Directors' Programme application form](#) →

We will also require:

- A one-page personal statement outlining your experience and motivation for seeking to join the programme and what you hope to gain from it
- A copy of your CV
- A letter of commitment from a member of the University Executive responding to the following questions:
 - Will the University provide the required time and funding to support the nominee's participation?
 - What does the University hope is gained from the nominee's participation? For the individual and the organisation?

Please email this to arrive by close of business on Friday 1 December 2024 to:

Catherine Webb

✉ c.f.webb@ahua.ac.uk

☎ 07785 286833

Contact details

✉ info@ahua.ac.uk

🐦 AHUAUK

🌐 association-of-heads-of-university-administration-ahua

➔ https://ahua.ac.uk



07/2021

Programme Directors

Rachel and Kim are AHUA registered coaches providing support to both newly appointed and experienced COOs, Secretaries and Registrars through coaching and facilitated Action Learning Sets. They are also co-directors of the AHUA's other flagship development offering, the Aspiring Registrar and COO Programme.



Rachel Holmes

Rachel has a wide range of experience in the private and public sectors, designing and delivering personal and team development programmes for clients in HE, the NHS and the pharmaceutical, legal, financial service and not-for-profit sectors. After an early career with a major publisher of psychometric instruments, she established her own consultancy in 2001. Originally a team development specialist, Rachel is also a qualified executive coach. She has worked with clients across the HE sector for the last 17 years.



Kim Newton-Woof

After a decade of working in higher education, Kim now operates as an independent specialist leadership consultant, facilitator and coach. Still operating as a trusted partner in the university sector, she also supports other sectors including, FE, health, finance, media and charity. Kim spends her days designing and delivering development experiences with and for leaders and teams. Taking a human-first approach, she uses creative ways help leaders fine-tune what they do, make different choices, and develop their own solutions.

I have learned more about myself, my own motivators and strengths. I have also learnt about the sector, different institutional cultures, roles etc, this has helped me understand more about the sector and where I can be most effective.

Kerry Matthews, former Director of Student and Education Services, currently Chief Student Officer at University of Surrey

The programme has been supported by the following organisations:

