Welcome to the February 2021 in partnership

In this month's edition of In Partnership we focus on our February Connect Benefit theme exploring the impact of Covid-19 on gender equality in HE. We also explore our work on anti-racism, senior leadership development and recent member benefit publications, resources and events.

There is still time to provide feedback on In Partnership to ensure it continues to meet your needs. Share your thoughts by completing this short survey.

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

In this issue
+ Connect Benefit Series
+ Member Benefits and Opportunities
+ Teaching and Learning
+ Leadership and Development
+ Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
+ International Spotlight
+ New content and publications
+ Dates for diary
Connect Benefit Series January

January’s Connect Benefit has examined key issues of quality, flexibility and accessibility from the perspectives of HEIs and students to understand the tensions around what is best for student success and how HEIs can meet changing needs of society and employer and what is best for the sustainability of the institution.

The pandemic has highlighted that most higher education institutions need to enhance their capacity to deliver flexible and resilient education systems that would meet student expectations and the accelerating social and economic transformations that wider society anticipates. This requires a ‘rethink’ not only of what and how we teach but also what shape HEIs need to take to deliver on the changing demands of students, employers and society.

This month’s outputs include a webinar, video provocations, thought pieces and blogs.

February Connect Benefit Series – How has Covid-19 impacted on gender equality in HE?

February’s Connect Benefit Series theme will examine 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. Are there elements of the response to the pandemic that have the potential to advance gender equality in the longer term? What has inhibited or regressed it and what could the sector do differently?

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

Ensuring continued steps towards gender equality

In this blog, Ellen Pugh introduces our Connect Member Benefit theme for February, ‘How has Covid-19 impacted on gender equality in HE?’

Survey

Between October and December 2020 Advance HE conducted a survey exploring the impact of Covid-19 on remote working, the support staff have received from their institutions and gender differences in these experiences. The results and our corresponding recommendations will be reported at our virtual Women in HE Conference on 25 February 2021.

Global roundtable on gender equality in HE

Our online roundtable event will bring together senior representatives from the HE sector globally to deepen our understanding of the impact of Covid-19 on gender equality for staff in higher education and to start to identify actions that have sought to reduce its impact.

This event takes place on 18 February at 16:00 GMT.

Find out more
Member Benefits and Opportunities

Advance HE Knowledge Bank

Advance HE membership allows member organisations globally access to the Advance HE Knowledge Bank. Knowledge Bank is an online library of good practice resources and toolkits covering a huge range of up-to-date guidance, approaches and latest thinking to support approaches to transformative leadership. It will be of interest to HR professionals, as well as those who lead and have responsibilities for managing and developing people in HE.

Today’s HE leaders are faced with enormous challenges in various aspects of leadership and management. Knowledge Bank provides practical, easy-to-access guidance and ideas for HE leaders, managers and in-depth resources and tools for HR professionals.

Resources within Knowledge Bank are organised around the core themes of learning and development, HR tools, leadership and strategy, managing people, personal skills and projects and operations. The toolkit is packed with content in various forms: toolkits, self-assessments, audio clips, quick reads, case studies, videos, infographics and long-form articles.

Access to Knowledge Bank is available through My AdvanceHE, with a limited number of licenses available per institution. For access, members should log on to My Advance HE and use the ‘Knowledge Bank’ link within ‘My Profile’ to access. For further enquiries or any problems with access, please email networks@advance-he.ac.uk

Tackling structural race inequality in higher education

Launching in February 2021 ‘Decolonising Identity’, is the second of four strands forming our member benefit initiative on ‘Tackling structural race inequality in HE’.

This strand will focus on how people of colour identify in different spaces – personal familiar space; in the institutional space; and in wider society.

As part of this strand, we will be releasing a series of three podcasts, with the aim of examining how the environment can affect how a person of colour identifies.

**Episode 1: ‘What’s in a name?’**

This episode will explore how people of colour are categorised in the UK, its history and implications.

**Episode 2: ‘Today world I will play the part of...’**

This episode will explore how people of colour navigate personal and professional spaces, when self-identity comes up against assumed identity.

**Episode 3 ‘Can I get my ally badge now?’**

This episode asks, in tackling structural racism what is the role of the ‘ally’? What does it mean within higher and further education to be an anti-racist advocate, and what do staff and students of colour truly need from white colleagues?

Collaborative Development Fund

The application deadline for the 2020-21 Collaborative Development Fund has now closed. Further updates on project allocations will be announced in due course.

The Collaborative Development Fund is an Advance HE member benefit. We invited our colleagues at member institutions to apply for the funding of between £20,000 and £35,000 per project, with projects starting in February 2021.

Upcoming projects include:

+ Developing flexible ecosystems for education that support student success: where are we now, what works and where next?
+ Board diversity practice project
+ The reshaping of higher education and research institute strategy and culture: pandemic perturbations, evolution or revolution?
Degree Apprenticeships – challenges and opportunities

Degree Apprenticeships provide students with an opportunity to work towards a Bachelors or Masters degree, combining study with paid work. In this blog, Dr Kay Hack, Principal Adviser for Learning and Teaching at Advance HE discusses the challenges and opportunities associated with this study route with Degree Apprentices Alex, Charles, and Sam.

Why did you choose to study a degree apprenticeship (DA)?

Alex: I was working full-time with JP Morgan, after graduating in Business Management and Publishing Media. I knew I wanted a change in direction but a return to full-time education was not feasible, I was therefore very excited to hear that my employer would be partnering with the University of Bath to offer a new Computer Science Digital Apprenticeship programme. I applied for, and was delighted to be offered, a software engineering graduate position and a place on the DA programme.

Charles: I was also working at JP Morgan in Project Management and Business Analysis on large technology programmes. The type of products we deliver means we are faced with complex challenges and decisions around our technical implementation. To effectively represent our customers and understand the day-to-day challenges that my team are facing I knew I had to brush up on my computer science skills, something that I’d been trying to do to without much success over the last couple of years. I knew that I learn best in a structured and collaborative environment, so the MSc Computer Science via a DA seemed to be an ideal opportunity.

Sam: Unlike Alex and Charles, this was my first degree, so the DA provided me with the opportunity to study full-time at the University of Leeds, whilst developing valuable work experience through fully paid placements - and have my tuition fees paid.

What are the benefits and challenges for this mode of learning?

Alex: Being able to study and apply directly what I learned in my job was perfect for me. I was fully aware of the time commitment that it would require and because of it being part-time it would last a few years, but it was the perfect fit for my aspirations and personal development. The DA scheme has been my best university experience, mainly because I was not in it for the fresher’s week and the on-campus student life. My small cohort all had the same mind-set, we wanted to learn as much as we could, do our best to get top marks and help each other along the way. There is a different sense of community with DA cohorts, but having things like Slack, online lectures with our professors, and being able to reach out to them asynchronously worked really great. Being the first cohort, we also provided a lot of feedback and improvements for the following years, especially in terms of how the modules were taught and spread out, what types of assignments we enjoyed the most and what industry topics should be included in the programme. Having our opinions listened to and acted upon was really motivating...

Quality and standards in higher education

Advance HE responds to the OfS consultation on regulating quality and standards in higher education: raising the bar

We welcome the opportunity to respond to this consultation and look forward to responding to the more detailed proposals contained in the planned Phase 2 consultation. Our response is informed by research and by input from members of our Learning and Teaching Strategic Advisory Group. It does not necessarily reflect the views of all of our members.

We fully support the raising of standards in higher education, though we do have some concern that some of the proposals for access, retention and progression have the potential to lead to greater inequality and act to the detriment of already disadvantaged students.
Experiences of studying via an accredited MOOC

Cathy Stevens and Miranda Sims who are studying on the Graduate Certificate/ Masters in Digital Learning Leadership on the FutureLearn MOOC platform accredited by Deakin University, reflect on their learning experience.

How a flexible and authentic approach to tertiary learning reinvigorated a passion for learning when working full time – Cathy Stevens

Seven years after graduating from my undergraduate degree, I completed a Masters via distance learning while employed full-time. I, like many others, had experienced the tension between the competing demands of work and study and, now exhausted and burnt out, I was done with higher education...or so I thought. However, with my role in education changing fundamentally – thanks Covid-19! – and despite being busier than ever designing, developing and implementing online learning solutions, I started a Graduate Certificate in Digital Learning Leadership at Deakin University. This decision was born from a desire to reorient my role in education and run community-based art and design courses. I can remember saying on several occasions that my heart lies in education, and that my teaching philosophy deeply aligns with my creative work and practice.

The realisation that I wanted to specialise in digital learning technologies for creative disciplines, prompted a search for online courses in learning design. I considered my application for the Master of Digital Learning Leadership with great care, I wanted to make sure I was clear about the learning outcomes and how they mapped to my career trajectory. This qualification is a unique offering, designed for experienced professionals already working in emerging technologies and digital learning in higher education. I chose this pathway as it provides the opportunity to receive recognition for my professional practice – assessed by an external industry panel – with the flexibility to build my capabilities as a cross-disciplinary researcher. The exciting aspect of this program is that I have been able to apply and test my learning in my professional practice, with one informing the other.

My experience of this unit was fantastic and highly rewarding; the learning design and delivery highlighted best practice in emerging technologies, social and cultural trends, and implications for digital assessment design. This programme allows me to design my research and teaching practice to focus on this emerging field and apply it to creative disciplines to enhance connection and digital learning innovations that are meaningful and considered. I am comfortable with my decision to enrol on this program; the course plan is specific and professionally oriented with noticeably clear and practical aims. I am genuinely excited about my work and final thesis project and the future opportunities to follow!

Teaching and Learning continued

Online learning at the nexus of professional practice, teaching and research - Miranda Sims

Why this, why now?

I completed a Bachelor of Arts in Visual Culture in 2013, fully online, through Curtin University (Perth, Australia), whilst working full time as a teacher in vocational education. I am currently a designer and educator based in Melbourne. I also teach and consult in learning design in higher education and run community-based art and design courses. I can remember saying on several occasions that if I had something of significance to add, then I would complete a Masters in art or design. I now know that my heart lies in education, and that my teaching philosophy deeply aligns with my creative work and practice.

A strange new world – is this a MOOC or university?

I enrolled in my first unit, 'Digital Learning Design and Assessment'; and when I saw the unit page appear on my student profile, the memories of late night assignment writing came flooding back. Nevertheless, there was still a tinge of excitement that comes with learning something new. What greeted me was nothing like the standard learning management system course I was expecting. Instead, I had a ‘welcome’ video which led me to 10-12 topics for the fortnight. Each of these included a short video or article, links to more resources, prompts to stimulate my thinking and a community of learners and our facilitator alike – discussing, questioning and sharing ideas.

It looked like a MOOC and felt like a MOOC and I have to admit I triple checked my enrolment to make sure I was in the right place! It was vastly different to my previous experiences of extensive required reading lists, online lectures and a deserted unit page with almost no interaction between classmates or with the lecturer.

While it took some getting used to, the MOOC-like structure was also the greatest strength of the course. The ‘bite-size’ approach to content provided flexibility, allowing me to engage with content at times that suited me, like the five minutes I had spare between meetings during my day. I was free to invest my time in my topics of interest, rather than just churning through the syllabus.

The structure of the MOOC prioritised a sense of community and I quickly engaged with the online learning community – something which hadn’t been available in my previous online learning experience.

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Leadership and Development

In conversation with…Top Management Programme in HE Programme Directors, Louisa Hardman and Robin Ryde

With the next cohort of Advance HE’s Top Management Programme for Higher Education on the horizon, we spoke to the programme directors to discuss the importance of high quality leadership in difficult times.

The 47th iteration of the Top Management Programme for Higher Education (TMP HE) will start in late April with an updated focus on leadership in changing times due to the global pandemic and the difficulties this has caused throughout the world.

To find out how the programme has been adapted and why it is so important in these unpredictable times, we met (virtually) with programme directors Louisa Hardman and Robin Ryde to discuss.

Opening with what they describe as TMP’s defining characteristic “that [it] has always adapted to the changing context of higher education”, Louise and Robin discuss:

+ the main challenges for executive leadership at present
+ how the programme is going to be delivered in these changing times
+ how the lessons from the programme stay with participants throughout their careers...

Louisa points to six key challenges as the backdrop for the programme: contextual – making sense of the changing world; organisational – how do we lead organisational change at a transformational level; technical – managing money, sustainability and digital capacity; relational – mobilising teams, creating engagement, sustaining cultures for performance and addressing inequalities; personal – maintaining personal effectiveness and resilience; political – how do we ensure the sector remains politically astute.

Discussing the format of the programme, they highlight the key elements of the three week long modules:

+ Week 1 – focusing on change, strategy and leading the institution
+ Week 2 – ‘International’, understanding how global HE is responding to shared challenges
+ Week 3 – focusing on governance and place (civic/political/societal).

They also commend the positives of the more blended approach which has allowed for more opportunity to “plug in the right kind of expertise” at any point in the programme, wherever they are in the world. Small – ‘impact’ – group work, 360s and coaching also continue to be key features of the programme and provide personal connections and networks.

Talking about the ongoing impact of TMP and how the learning stays with delegates after the programme ends, they highlight the deliberate process on TMP HE to “encourage deep and lasting networks” by building understanding and trust and authenticity between members of the group, alongside the adaptive models, frameworks and insights of best practice used throughout the programme about how to deal with particular situations as leaders. Louisa noted the “hunger for a network” in the context of “lonely” senior roles and how professional and personal friendships live on beyond the programme.

They noted how reflective practice and personal development helped to build confidence and resilience for the leadership challenges ahead.

Watch the conversation with Louisa and Robin below:

The application deadline for TMP 47 is 1700 GMT on 26 February 2021.

Find out more
Leadership and Development continued

My learning experiences - transitioning to senior management

Making the transition from Head of Partnership to a senior leadership role for the Secondary PGCE programme at the University of Roehampton, Ruth Seabrook shares her thoughts on Advance HE’s Transition to Leadership course she attended and the benefits gained since.

Having recently taken on a more senior role in the programme, I discussed the possibility of doing some additional CPD to assist with the move into senior management. The Advance HE course was suggested and having looked at the content and having now gone through the programme I think it was one of the best courses I have been on, but more importantly one that was very flexible (especially as half way through we went into lockdown and it went virtual) and moulded to suit each person’s requirements.

One of the main reasons I liked the course was that the participants were from a huge variety of universities all doing very disparate roles and with only a couple of us actually in teacher education. This meant that whilst you had similar backgrounds in higher education you couldn’t focus in on the minute details of your own sphere of experience but were challenged and inspired by others who had very different practices and challenges to you. This allowed much broader and insightful discussion, allowed access to wider spheres of experience and therefore much more learning potential.

Whilst we were able to meet up in London, there were very rich discussions able to take place both within the confines of the course but also during breaks, which really added to the quality of the experiences. Once lockdown happened we continued with this via webinars and although it was different, the experience was still very valuable.

One of the most insightful aspects of the course for me personally was the initial coaching session that we took an active part in and one person volunteered to be coached. I had always thought I had a good grasp on coaching, delivering mentor training, but my eyes were truly opened to the power of coaching versus mentoring in the demonstration. I was truly astonished how, with so little knowledge of the person, background and problem, and only a few measured questions, the coach had enabled them to discuss fully the problem, come up with potential outcomes and a solution to the problem within ten minutes.

I integrated elements of this into our training, for example emotional intelligence (Goleman 1998), which has been very well received by mentors, who sometimes struggle with mentor/mentee relationships and want more form training than just the procedural gumph. Some of the activities we undertook allowed deep reflection, looking at our own management styles, our personality traits, how we influence and lead others.

Some of the activities like the Institutional challenge project really helped to focus my thoughts and fit around our strategic plan for the new Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (EIF) the new Early Career framework (ECF) for newly qualified teachers (NQTs) and the new Core Curriculum Framework, all new to ITE and in the process of being rolled out across the country. I was able to focus time on this, discuss with managers and carefully think strategically about these could be implemented and how we mapped out the Curriculum.

Without the spotlight on this in the course I think our implementation could have lacked focus and been much less successful – Obviously we await the Ofsted feedback on this!

I really welcomed the readings, with supplementary resources for wider participation. I made the time (and you really must) to engage with this and other resources given, which helped to deepen understanding and I felt well prepared for the meetings, discussions and able to make the most from each session.

An outcome from the course was to join our Senior Leadership group, where strategic planning, the business plan and other really interesting aspects are discussed at a much higher level. I feel ready now to take the next step and this could work for you too. Now, before I ask a member of our team to do something, I think about my tone, the activity and how I should approach them. I try to support and encourage more and lead in a manner that I would like to be led. I have always thought of myself as supportive but taking the time to reflect on this has been worth its weight in gold. (Goleman 2000)

The course leaders were superb, very approachable, willing to be flexible and very engaging in their delivery, using humour and real-life situations to make elements of the course very realistic – especially in lockdown.

If you are looking at gaining exposure to coaching, discussing real world management and leadership challenges and hoping to take a look at your inner self – then this is the course for you.

Transition to Leadership will explore your personal leadership, your team leadership and your change leadership style. By understanding your own resilience and how you can influence and inspire others you will learn new approaches to manage difficult situations and enable institutional change to happen.
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Racism is an age-old virus
With an increasing number of cases relating to xenophobia, discrimination, and racial harassment, Dr Yujun Xu calls for more effort “to sustain an inclusive, safe, harmonious, and diverse environment in higher education, both online and offline.”

“I have locked myself in the small flat for more than six weeks. Six weeks without stepping out of my room, even once.” A Chinese friend of mine, who’s pursuing a PhD programme at a Scottish university, has been terrified by an incident in which she was shouted at as ‘Coronavirus!’ outside a supermarket in May 2020.

Her case does not stand alone. The Covid-19 pandemic has led to an increasing number of cases relating to xenophobia, discrimination, and racial harassment. Since Covid-19 was reported to be originated from China, many of these cases were directly against people of Asian descent and/or appearance. By late April 2020, the New York City Commission on Human Rights received 248 reports of harassment and discrimination, with over half of the victims being of Asian descent. A poll into racism in the UK also suggests that 76 per cent of ethnic Chinese have experienced a direct racial slur. Statistics also suggest that the use of anti-Chinese hashtags has increased substantially; research analysing more than 600 million tweets identified a 300% increase in hashtags that support or encourage violence against China during a single week in March 2020. The BAME community, including ethnic Chinese, are demanding that racial harassment is addressed and projects such as ‘Tackling Racism On Campus’ and its associated sub-projects are of critical importance. These anti-racist projects aim at ensuring learning and teaching processes and curriculum content acknowledge diversities and give those diversities both place and value.

Unlike the pandemic, racism resulted from structural inequalities, colonialism and imperialism. In tackling racial harassment, there is a need to understand power relations and the intersectionality of oppressions as well as addressing issues at a personal, cultural and institutional level.

Although our understanding of race and racism should not be reduced to micro-aggression alone, micro-aggressions are precisely the way that it most frequently happens in educational institutions. Higher education institutes, such as the University of Edinburgh, are raising awareness and producing educational resources to help recognise and counteract racial micro-aggressions. Anti-racist academics and students are now calling for the Academy to engage in ‘decolonising the curriculum’ to encourage engagement with the histories and knowledge that do not originate from the West and to assist students to think critically about why these have been marginalised and de-centred.

In relation to racial harassment, it is probably still the case that some people may not be aware enough to understand what this concept covers. For example, all too often, offensive comments are justified as ‘jokes’ or ‘banter’, but psychological damage has been caused by conscious or unconscious ‘micro-aggressions’ or simply a lack of empathy and understanding. For instance, students and staff members who have experienced racial harassment reveal that they have had to hide or play down the negative impact of such experiences. Racism can also include religious micro-aggressions and where they intersect, as in the case of Islamophobia, colleagues and students report having to hide some of their symbolic forms or features that may have religious underpinnings.

Against this worrying backdrop, more efforts need to be taken to sustain an inclusive, safe, harmonious, and diverse environment in higher education, both online and offline. More attention should be paid to embedding anti-racism within the curriculum and to enabling students to discuss core concepts including assimilation, race, racism, power, and privilege. There is a need to go beyond the apolitical and ahistorical celebration of diversity. Both students and staff need to live, study, work and collaborate while fostering a sense of community.

Racial harassment is as dangerous as coronavirus. Racism can and does kill. We live with hope that with the vaccines now available we will be able to overcome Covid, but how confident can we be that racism and racial harassment can be eliminated? What role can the Academy play towards achieving such an outcome?

As part of Tackling Racism on Campus funded by the Scottish Funding Council, the new joint research project was announced recently [12 January 2021] by Advance HE and the Quality Assurance Agency Scotland (QAAS) to capitalises on the sector-wide commitment to tackle racism in Scottish further and higher education.

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.
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion continued

Surveys insights into female students’ experience in 2020

At all levels of study, women tend to report fewer opportunities for career preparation.

Among postgraduate researchers (PGRs) responding to PRES, fewer women agreed that they had received training to develop their transferable skills or received advice on career options. In terms of development opportunities, they were also less likely to have engaged with non-academic partners, for example in industry, throughout their programme. At postgraduate taught level, female PGTs were less likely than their male counterparts to say that they feel better prepared for their future career as a result of their course. Female undergraduates responding to UKES were less likely to have talked about their career plans with teaching staff or advisors.

Investigating the reasons why women tend to perceive fewer opportunities is a complex task. At sector level, institutions with higher than average proportions of female students may wish to look to broaden their career development opportunities available to students. It might also be that at discipline or course level different career preparation opportunities are available, and that institutions can look to improve provision across those courses chosen mainly by female students.

Postgraduate female students also tend to be less likely to feel they have had other skills development opportunities.

Among both research and taught postgraduates, as well as career skills, women tend to be less likely to feel they have developed other skills or had other development opportunities. Female postgraduate research students responding to PRES are less likely to say they have agreed a personal training or development plan, and they are also less likely to have had the opportunity to teach or demonstrate as part of their degree programme or to have had the opportunity to submit a paper for publication in an academic journal or book. Fewer women responding to PTES agreed that they had developed more confidence about independent learning as a result of their course, or confidence to be innovative or creative. Fewer female PGTs agreed their research skills and their ability to communicate information effectively to diverse audiences had developed.

That being said, among postgraduate researchers, there are areas in which female students are more likely to have had development opportunities than male students. Women PGRs are more likely to have presented a paper or poster at an academic research conference, and to have communicated their research to a non-academic audience.

Another area in which women report lower satisfaction than students of other genders is interacting with staff.

This is particularly the case among taught students. Fewer female respondents to PTES agreed they were happy with the support for their learning they received from staff on their course, and fewer female undergraduates who completed UKES said they had asked questions in taught sessions or contributed to discussions about course material in other ways, discussed their academic performance and/or feedback with teaching staff, discussed ideas from their course with teaching staff outside taught sessions, or worked with teaching staff on activities other than coursework.

As suggested in relation to career preparation, it might be that staff interactions vary by institutions, courses or disciplines with differing proportions of female students. The differences could also be linked to demographic differences between women and those of other genders – for example, female undergraduate respondents to UKES were considerably more likely to spend time providing care for dependents than other students, which may mean they have less time to spend engaging with staff. Women responding to PTES were more likely to live with a partner and/or children so may also be more likely to have caring responsibilities. They were also more likely to live six or more miles from campus, so having a longer commute may prevent female students from spending that time engaging with staff.

The Surveys & Insights Conference 2021: Adapting to challenging times provides an opportunity to discuss and debate the potential of insights from surveys, qualitative research and wider methods of capturing the student voice.

Find out more and book your place
International Spotlight

Advance HE delivers a national level Women in STEM mentoring programme in Peru

Advance HE continues to demonstrate its commitment to championing gender equality across the global higher education sector, working with Peruvian academics to develop the skills and build capacity for a Women in STEM mentoring programme.

After being commissioned by the British Council in Peru and in partnership with the National Council of Science, Technology and Technological Innovation of Peru (CONCYTEC) and the Committee Pro-Women in STI (Peru), Advance HE developed an intensive four-day online programme, entitled ‘Introduction to Mentoring in Higher Education’.

The programme was designed for academics working across all science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects to widen access to mentoring research which in the past, had been limited to medical and biotechnical disciplines.

The programme forms part of a wider British Council and CONCYTEC initiative to reduce social and economic inequalities for women in Peru by providing them with the opportunity to acquire new skills whilst at the same time building confidence and enhancing the participant’s self-esteem required to succeed in academia.

The programme was delivered between 23-26 November to 186 participants, involving four three-hour online sessions and was intended to be the first phase of a wider mentoring programme, aimed at growing a cohort of mentors who can effectively mentor female early career researchers.

The lead for the project delivery was Dr Debra Croft, an associate with Advance HE, who has had extensive experience in Equality & Diversity in HE in Wales, and has launched and managed various mentoring programmes at all levels in HE.

Dr Croft said:

“This was a project with a short lead-in timescale which I was delighted to be involved with. The enthusiasm of our Peruvian colleagues and the way in which the participants threw themselves into the intensive course made it a pleasure and extremely worthwhile. The feedback was fantastic and our aim of equipping the prospective mentors with the tools to make a difference was achieved, taking the best of local knowledge and combining that with sector best practice. I look forward to seeing the mentoring programme being rolled out in Peru.”

Adriana Delgado, Education and Society Manager at British Council Peru, said:

“I have been impressed by this group of women who have taken up the fight of moving forward the women in science agenda from behind, and in front of, the scenes whose effort has allowed us to carry out this first step in the mentoring programme in Peru.

I would like to thank them, our science and innovation coordinator, Advance HE, and the training speakers and facilitators that have made this possible. This training is an initiative from CONCYTEC’s Committee Pro Women in STI that has been supported by the British Council. It is also part of the British Council’s regional effort in the Americas to identify and strengthen spaces of collaboration, based on the evidence, to increase the participation of women in science as well as of researchers that might suffer direct or indirect discrimination due to their ethnicity or origin which responds to the country’s priorities of inclusion.”

The Women in HE Conference 2021 will consider the key challenges in achieving step change across HE in relation to all gender equality issues through exploration across a range of themes relating to women in HE.

Find out more and book your place
Employability: breaking the mould
This collection of employability case studies brings together examples including virtual placements, the creation of placement opportunities actually within university settings themselves; and the empowering of students to map and plot their employability journeys or/and work-related learning experiences, and cross-fertilising the learning from employability initiatives between international and home domiciled cohorts.
Access the publication

Leadership through a digital lens
Contributing to our monthly member benefit series on ‘rethinking higher education’, Professor Lawrie Phipps reflects on what we have learnt over the past year from having technology front and centre of HE, asking how we ensure that we do not adopt a techno-solutionist approach but look at our goals through a digital lens.
Read more

Disabled Students’ Commission Annual Report 2020-2021: Enhancing the disabled student experience
The Disabled Students’ Commission Annual Report, Enhancing the disabled student experience, is a summary of all the guidance the Commission has published for students with a disability so they can participate fully in higher education, particularly during the Covid-19 global pandemic. The review also looks beyond Covid-19 support and sets out what the Commission will focus on in its next phase of work.
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Understanding structural inequality: informing meaningful change in 2021
As Advance HE continues its ‘Tackling Structural Race Inequality’ thematic membership strand, Jess Moody considers our understandings of structural racism and how these understandings influence the way we approach and measure change.
Read more

A new tool to support EDI in HE
Lucy Jones introduces the EDI Resource Bank – a new open-access database hosted by the University of Nottingham to support those engaging in EDI in UK universities.
Find out more
### Dates for the diary

**Conferences + Events**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date(s)</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Women in HE Conference 2021: Building back better for gender equality in HE</strong></td>
<td>25 February 2021 - Virtual</td>
<td>During February 2021 we will be focusing on how the sector can progress gender equality in light of Covid-19. The results of a recent survey completed by more than 1,300 HE colleagues will be shared at the Women in HE conference along with insights gained from our work on gender equality including the publication of the Aurora longitudinal study.</td>
<td>Find out more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Conference 2021</strong></td>
<td>16-18 March 2021 - Virtual</td>
<td>This conference will bring together the annual Advance HE EDI conference with the biannual Scottish conference with the theme of ‘courageous conversations and adventurous approaches: creative thinking in tackling inequality’. Through forecasting emerging EDI topics and priorities in the sector, the conference will create space for reflection and capacity-building and will explore hidden and emerging EDI issues.</td>
<td>Find out more</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Teaching and Learning Conference Multi-booking discount** | 6-8 July 2021 - Virtual | Institutions looking to book multiple places for the Teaching and Learning Conference 2021 can make significant savings. Institutions will receive:  
+ 10% discount when booking 5 places  
+ 15% discount when booking 10 places  
To receive your single-use discount voucher, e-mail events@advance-he.ac.uk before making your booking. | 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

Delegates from member institutions will be charged £500 and delegates from non-member institutions will be charged £665.

**Book your place**

### 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

Delegates from member institutions will be charged £450 and delegates from non-member institutions will be charged £600.

**Book your place**

### Get involved in 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. 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**
### Dates for the diary

#### Development Programmes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>Start Date</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Transition to Leadership | 4 March 2021 | Those entering leadership roles for the first time during these challenging times need to be fully equipped to do so, particularly when those roles involve leading academic teams and colleagues. Transition to Leadership is a tried and tested programme that has three main themes:  
+ personal leadership  
+ team leadership and collaborating with others  
+ leadership in times of change. |
| Top Management Programme for Higher Education | April and October 2021 | TMP HE is an open programme delivered in a cohort structure. There is a strong emphasis on ensuring that each cohort is a diverse peer group, enhancing the learning experience. The programme is split over three residential weeks with an impact day between each.  
TMP HE’s truly agile delivery method means that the programme content and delivery is shaped by its participants whilst ensuring delivery of the defined curriculum. Providing timely value to the participants, this is achieved through continuous review and feedback. |
| Spotlight Series for Senior Strategic Leaders | 4 March and 30 March | The Spotlight Series has been designed to be short, half-day, impactful online workshops, as stimulus for development and collective engagement. Each online workshop will focus on one of three topical core challenge areas: strategic, complex change and digital. |
| Virtual Teaching | 15 February 2021 | Advance HE has designed Virtual Teaching, aimed at nurturing and developing contemporary professional learning, with a particular focus on online pedagogies and digital delivery within fully virtual or hybrid teaching spaces. The programme models approaches and activities which can be taken into HE teaching, positioning the participant as a learner in online spaces and inviting them to reflect critically on the experiences in order to enhance their own teaching practices. |
| Strategic Leadership Programme | 27 January 2021 | The Strategic Leadership Programme will appeal to those with a portfolio which reaches across the institution and who want to exercise their strategic vision to make a meaningful impact in shaping the future direction of the HE sector. Apply before 26 February 2021 to receive a 10% discount on your place on the Strategic Leadership Programme. |
| Fellowship Application Builder | | Advance HE is delighted to offer the Fellowship Application Builder: a six-week online, self-directed course designed to enable individuals to use their experience of their teaching and supporting learning practice in higher education to develop an application for Fellowship (Descriptor 2 of the UKPSF). |
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**Find out more**