

Head of Department Handbook

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Introduction to the Programme

Programme Aim

The Head of Department (HoD) development programme aims to equip new HoDs, through a tailored programme of blended development interventions, with the knowledge, underpinning understanding and associated skills and behaviours aligned to the role.

The programme is appropriate for newly appointed HoDs, deputy HoDs and academics who may be considering applying for the role within the next year.

On appointment, all new HoDs will have a meeting with an Organisational Developer to discuss their development needs, outline the development offer available and agree a tailored programme of activities.

This handbook outlines the development activities available to all HoDs.

HoD Induction

The induction sessions aim to clarify the role and expectations of the academic leader within the context of the University strategy and to start to prepare new HoDs for the different leadership and management aspects of the role.

The sessions facilitate networking and sharing practice with colleagues from different areas and provide the opportunity to hear from senior academic leaders and current HoDs about their personal approaches, challenges and lessons learned in respect of the role.

The induction is broken down into the following sessions:

- HoD Induction: Introductions and Perspectives •
- HoD Induction: HR Partners session

You will be invited to these directly by Organisational Development (OD).

HoD Workshops

This series covers the essentials incoming HoDs need. Dates and times are on the [OD webpages](#). HoD's will be invited to these workshops by Organisational Development. The workshops are also appropriate for colleagues who may be considering the role of HoD.

HoD PeopleXD Demo - A walkthrough of the HR systems approval processes and departmental data access, including self-service reporting and the Lancaster University Workforce Profile tool. [Click here to access the session recording](#). (Contact the [HR Systems team](#) for any further support.)

HoD Health and Safety - This session will explore what managing health and safety risks to staff and students means in practice, talk through some of the key actions and sources of support HoDs should be aware of and look at the importance of leadership in safety culture. (HoD's will be contacted directly by Health and Safety to arrange a date.)

HoD Academic Promotions - This session provides clarification on the academic promotion process, including roles, responsibilities and timelines. Guidance for HoD's on reviewing applications, writing supporting statements, providing guidance and giving feedback to applicants.

HoD Academic Probations - This session provides clarification of the academic probation process and the manager's role. Guidance in how to manage the process, including writing effective and meaningful probationary agreements.

HoD Student Support Structures - This session will provide an overview of the University's student support structures and the role of departments, colleges and central Student Wellbeing Services.

HoD Finance and Budgeting - This workshop explains the Finance Strategy for Lancaster University. Outlining the macro context by explaining how the economic and political environment impact on the sector; the financial implications of this for Lancaster including the rationale for financial decision-making and the strategic priorities for the University going forward.

HoD Legal Responsibilities: Corporate Governance - This session covers the legal and regulatory frameworks for Higher Education and governance for Lancaster University. It covers the HoD role with respect to this framework, including GDPR, data protection, freedom of information and prevention.

HoD Legal Responsibilities: Staff and Students - This session covers the legal framework and HoD responsibility with respect to managing staff and students, covering safeguarding in HEIs, the Equality Act, relevant employment law and policies and procedures and the support available.

Coaching and Mentoring

One-to-one coaching with an external coach is available for all HoDs to support you in your role. Information about Coaching can be accessed via the [coaching webpages](#).

To book your coaching sessions please contact [OD](#).

Mentoring can support your learning and development throughout your career, particularly when you take on increased responsibilities such as the HoD role. A mentor can help you to think through strategic decisions and reflect on issues that you encounter. Its benefits include improving your understanding of the working environment, skills development, increased motivation and boosting confidence.

If you would like help in finding a mentor please contact [OD](#).

Action Learning

Action Learning Sets (ALS) for HoDs are offered as part of the development programme. These sessions will offer a safe space to work together on live problems sharing experiences and working to come up with practical solutions and develop a supportive network of peers. These dates will be put into your calendar, they are optional but provide regular opportunities to connect with other HoDs.

Shared Practice Events

A series of **Shared Practice Events** are being held across the year. These events will focus on topics identified by yourselves (the HoDs) such as 'Beyond Difficult Conversations'. Sessions will be held termly over lunch time, tea and coffee will be provided, if you would like to bring your own lunch please do so.

Management Resources

A series of curated resources (articles, activities, videos etc.) are available to all managers via [OD's webpages](#) that underpin all aspects of managing people. There is also a [Managers Handbook](#) which provides guidance and information on the role for all managers.

Other Development Activities

Managing Difficult Conversations

This workshop is for anyone having one-to-one conversations such as about poor performance, student conduct, or negative attitudes.

At the end of the workshop you will be able to:

- Understand the need for 'difficult' conversations
- Conduct conversations using a structured approach using a range of listening and questioning skills
- Describe a 3-stage process that can be used to defuse anger, calm someone down and move the situation forward.

For session dates and times please see the [OD webpages](#).

Recruiting the Best

The University's aim is that all candidates have a positive and equitable experience at all stages of recruitment and selection process.

This workshop aims to ensure that participants are equipped with the understanding, knowledge and skills to undertake fair and equitable recruitment and selection, ensuring that all candidates have a positive experience, and the best candidate is ultimately selected.

For session dates and times please see the [OD webpages](#).

PDR

The [PDR webpages](#) offer a range of guidance, resources and E-Learning aimed to support reviewers and reviewees, including [PDR Reviewer Skills Training](#).

Preparing for Promotion

These events give academic, research and teaching staff the best chance of achieving academic promotion whatever their career stage.

With strong input from the Athena Swan, Race Equality Charter and EDI teams, and the Faculty Offices, this programme has been designed to ensure academic promotion is

available to all staff, and to encourage staff that have been underrepresented in the past to put forward academic promotion cases.

For more information please see the Preparing for Promotion webpages or contact [OD](#).

EDI E-Learning

To make a fairer and more inclusive University a reality, we have a range of EDI- related eLearning for our staff, including guidance about University policies and procedures. [Here you will find optional EDI eLearning courses](#), covering a variety of sector-specific EDI topics as well as related University policies, advice and guidance. For additional EDI support, please contact Akhtar Zaman, EDI Manager.

Curriculum and Educational Development Academy (CEDA)

CEDA can provide information about the University's expectations for academic staff teaching qualifications, guidance about appropriate pathways of professional development for academic probation, and introduce the range of wider development that can support individual and group education and curriculum practice. For more information please contact the [CEDA team](#) directly.

To find more development opportunities for you and your staff, please visit the [OD webpages](#).

Additional Resources

[Introductory note for new committee/group members.](#)