



The Association of Heads of University Administration

# AHUA DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

*for Senior Professional Service Leaders in HE*

*Which development opportunity is right for you?*

# AHUA TRAINING & SUPPORT OPTIONS

*AHUA offers a range of development programmes and support for members and other university staff. This is a summary of the options available.*



## THE ASPIRING REGISTRAR & COO PROGRAMME

### Who is it for?

Individuals actively considering a move into the role of Registrar/Chief Operating Officer (COO) at a university. Applicants will have been working at the level of Director or Head of one of the professional service functions, or as Deputy Registrar, for at least three years and report directly to the Registrar/COO.

### What does it cover?

The programme offers participants a unique opportunity to explore the diverse and challenging role of Registrar/COO and to reflect on their readiness for it or other leadership positions. During the programme you will have the opportunity to hear from a number of Registrars/COOs and a Vice Chancellor on their views on what these roles involve, and from a recruitment consultancy on the search and selection process for this type of role.

**Find out more**

Find out more on pages 4–5 [➔](#)



## PROFESSIONAL SERVICE DIRECTORS' PROGRAMME (PSDP)

### Who is it for?

Heads and Directors of professional services in HE, for example Directors of Finance, Estates, HR, Student Services etc, who have between one and three years' experience in the role.

### What does it cover?

The programme offers the opportunity to develop enhanced leadership skills, explore creative solutions to organisational challenges and establish a network of peers from a variety of functions across the sector. This results in more effective leaders who have a broader and more nuanced view of how leadership can effectively support organisational change.

**Find out more**

Find out more on pages 6–7 [➔](#)

## SUPPORT FOR AHUA MEMBERS

In addition to these development programmes, AHUA members can access other support opportunities including coaching and learning sets.

### Coaching

To assist with the transition to a demanding, high profile role, AHUA members who are also newly appointed Registrars/COOs have the opportunity to take up a series of four executive coaching sessions during the first year of their appointment. As an investment in our new members, the sessions are fully funded by the Association.

➔ Find out more about Coaching on our website:  
<https://ahua.ac.uk/resources/coaching/>

### Learning Sets

AHUA Learning Sets allow members to access a network of peers with whom to share and discuss current issues in a confidential and supportive environment. Members are brought together in groups of six to eight people, initially for five facilitated sessions, to focus on topical work-based issues and to explore effective ways of dealing with them. Sets meet on a regular basis, approximately every six to eight weeks.

➔ Find out more about Learning Sets:  
<https://ahua.ac.uk/resources/learning-sets/>

## AMBITIOUS FUTURES

Ambitious Futures is the graduate trainee scheme for professional services in HE. Established by the AHUA in 2012, it is now managed on the AHUA's behalf by a subsidiary company of the University of Nottingham.

The scheme provides trainees with a varied and challenging programme to help them develop the skills, knowledge, experience and aptitudes to become future Registrars and equivalent.

All major employment sectors have graduate schemes. Ambitious Futures was established by the AHUA with a view to ensuring the supply of engaged, dedicated professionals who have actively chosen the HE sector in which to develop their careers. Institutions that are part of the scheme have benefitted from bright and committed trainees who punch well above their weight in the projects they undertake and become invaluable assets to their employers.

AHUA members have a role to play in securing the future leadership of their institutions. Participating in the scheme not only demonstrates your commitment to talent development but also enhances the profile of your institution to future employees.

➔ Find out more by contacting the Ambitious Futures office on 0115 951 5752 or the Chair of the Ambitious Futures Board, Paul Greatrix, by email [paul.greatrix@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:paul.greatrix@nottingham.ac.uk)



*I was delighted that another senior colleague was able to attend the programme. Since attending I have seen him develop a much broader but also more nuanced perspective, display greater confidence and assertiveness, and has shown a previously unexpressed interest in taking on the Registrar role.*

Dave Hall  
Registrar & Chief Operating Officer  
University of Leicester

*Leading across HE professional services*

# THE ASPIRING REGISTRAR & COO PROGRAMME

## *Introduction*

*This programme aims to create the next cohort of University leaders. It is a challenging programme that encourages you to take stock of your career and look ahead to realising your potential.*

*You will have access to expertise from existing Registrars and COOs, as well as practical learning and coaching throughout.*

## Who should attend?

This programme is aimed at individuals who are actively considering a move into the most senior professional services position in the university. This role may be titled Registrar, Chief Operating Officer or Head of University Administration.

It is suitable for those currently working at the level of Director or Head of any of the professional service functions or Deputy Registrar. The nature of this programme means that it will appeal to those wishing to take stock of their career and maximise their potential.

Participants will have the opportunity to explore this diverse and challenging role and to reflect on their readiness for it or other leadership positions.

## Benefits to the institution

Organisations that have supported participants attend the programme find that their participants upon completion of the programme are:

- More effective leaders within their own functional areas;
- More able at contributing to strategic discussions within the organisation;
- Able to deputise more effectively for the Registrar/COO when required;
- Have a more nuanced view of the HE sector and the diversity of organisations within it.

*The programme gave me the space to understand better and reflect on my own personal leadership style. It also provided real focus to me in determining how I wanted my career to progress and what I needed to do to get where I wanted to be.*

Kieron Broadhead, Executive Director  
of Student Experience  
University of Southampton

## Programme overview

### The programme will cover:

- Assessing your readiness for a leadership position and the importance of having the right 'fit' in terms of role and institution;
- Increasing self-awareness and the understanding of your strengths and development needs;
- The variety of ways in which the Registrar/COO role is carried out across the sector;
- Exploring complex relationships between senior figures in the university structure;
- The search and selection process used by organisations when recruiting for these types of role.

### You will benefit from:

- Contributions from an experienced and a newly appointed Registrar/COO, as well as a Vice Chancellor and Registrar/COO from the same organisation on their expectations of leadership at this level, and from a recruitment consultancy on the search and selection process for this type of role;
- The opportunity to connect with members of AHUA to discuss their roles and career paths.


## Programme structure

The Programme takes place on 9½ days over 12 months.

### It includes:

- A development one-to-one discussion (two hours in London) with a Programme Director, who is also a professional coach, at both the start and finish of the programme;
- A 21/2 day residential programme usually held in North West England with both practical input and space for reflection;
- Four full-day action learning sessions – facilitated by an experienced coach;
- A workshop on preparing to apply for your next role in order to maximise your chances of success.

## How to apply

To find out how to apply, please visit the AHUA website  
<https://ahua.ac.uk/resources/aspiring-registrar-and-coo-programme/> 



*Leading with Impact*

# THE PROFESSIONAL SERVICE DIRECTORS' PROGRAMME

## *Introduction*

*This programme enables you to become a more impactful leader, one who develops high performing teams and contributes effectively to strategic cross-organisational projects and change.*

*During the programme you will hear from senior leaders from the sector, have the opportunity to learn from peers from a wide range of professional services, and benefit from practical learning and coaching.*

PSDP is run with the support of AUA, AUDE, BUFDG, SCONUL, UCISA & UHR



## Who should attend?

This programme is aimed at Directors and Heads of Professional Services in HE – for example Directors of Finance, Estates, HR, Student Services etc – who have between 1 and 3 years' experience in the role.

This programme offers the opportunity to develop enhanced leadership skills, explore creative solutions to organisational challenges and establish a network of peers from a variety of functions across the sector. This results in more effective leaders within organisations who have a broader and more nuanced view of how leadership can effectively support organisational strategy.

## Benefits to the institution

Organisations that have supported staff to attend the programme find their participants are:

- More effective leaders within their own functional areas;
- More able to contribute to strategic discussions within the organisation;
- Better placed to lead change within the organisation;
- Able to bring ideas from elsewhere in the sector to the challenges they face.

## Programme overview

The programme focuses on:

- Achieving greater personal impact and influence through better appreciation of the operating environment (cultural, political, tribal);
- Understanding what makes a high performing team;
- Harnessing diversity to deliver results;
- Increased self awareness and confidence: identifying strengths, weaknesses and blind spots and managing these effectively;
- Leading and supporting cross-organisational change.

## Programme structure


The programme consists of 9½ days spread over 11 months.

- A development one-to-one discussion (two hours in London) with a Programme Director (who is also a qualified coach) at both the start and finish of the programme;
- A 2½ day residential programme usually held in North West England which focuses on organisational culture, team working and influencing skills, with particular reference to the sometimes challenging relationship between professionals and academics;
- A participant co-created mid-programme workshop usually held in North West England to focus on an issue highlighted by participants;
- Four full-day action learning sessions facilitated by an experienced coach.

*The action learning was so valuable that since the programme finished we have maintained our set through continued sessions in person and we have also established a Whatsapp group to share experiences and keep in touch.*

Richard Stock  
Academic Registrar  
University of Essex

## How to apply

To find out how to apply, please visit the AHUA website  
<https://ahua.ac.uk/resources/psdp/> 

## About the AHUA

The Association of Heads of University Administration (AHUA) is the representative body for senior university managers (Registrars, Chief Operating Officers, Heads of Administration) in the UK and Ireland. The AHUA has 190 members from 140 institutions and is managed by an elected Executive Committee, with an office based at the University of Manchester.

The AHUA aims to represent the collective views of members on key issues and policies to the higher education (HE) sector, government and other stakeholders. It also brings together members to exchange information, share knowledge and experience, and to develop colleagues who aspire to fill senior roles in HE administration.

## Contact details

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☎ 0161 275 8060

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➔ <https://ahua.ac.uk>

➔ AHUA

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Sackville Street  
Manchester M60 1QD

*The programme was highly valuable – in no small part due to the excellence of the facilitators.*

Thomas Veit  
Director of External Relations  
University of Dundee

## Programme Director

### 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 a variety of different sectors. Following an early career with a major publisher of psychometric instruments, she established her own consultancy in 2001.



Rachel is a qualified executive coach and has been working with AHUA, both as a coach and programme facilitator for over 5 years, and as a result has in-depth understanding of the challenges faced by senior professional service leaders in HE. A key Associate for Advance HE, Rachel facilitates the leadership styles session on their Top Management Programme. She has lived and worked extensively overseas and as a fluent Russian speaker, has a keen interest in cross-cultural development issues.

## Programme Facilitators

### Kim Newton-Woof

Kim worked for more than a decade in HE before becoming an independent OD specialist, leadership consultant, facilitator and coach. She now supports leaders from the public and private sectors seeking effective, pragmatic approaches to organisational and personal change. Still operating as a trusted partner in the university sector, Kim's clients also include FE, health, finance, services and charities.



An AHUA Associate, Kim provides coaching services as part of the AHUA's coaching programme for newly appointed AHUA members and is a facilitator for the Association's Action Learning Sets and The Aspiring Registrar and COO Programme.

### Zoë Cohen

Zoë brings 18 years of leadership and 9 years of board level experience in large, complex organisations in the NHS. She has further built on this track record with a decade's experience as an external executive coach and leadership developer working with individuals, teams and groups from every sector of the economy.



She believes that leading and managing others is a privilege and inspirational, authentic leadership with integrity really matters. Zoë brings her values and experience to benefit individuals' and teams' performances through reaching new awareness, to achieve greater levels of trust, openness, clarity, mutual challenge, motivation and resilience. Zoë's style is highly empathic, yet challenging, tailored to the needs of every client.

