



Learning and  
Teaching  
Academy

Acadamaidh  
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agus Teagaisg

# **AdvanceHE Aurora Leadership Development Programme**

**2023-24 applicant guidance**



## Contents

1	Introduction .....	2
2	About AdvanceHE Aurora leadership development programme .....	2
3	Programme Delivery format .....	2
4	University’s engagement with the Aurora Programme.....	2
5	Previous participants’ feedback.....	3
6	Application form and submission deadline.....	4
7	Selection criteria.....	4
8	Selection process and outcomes .....	4
9	Queries.....	5
10	LTA & AdvanceHE Aurora Programme Privacy Statement.....	5



*Figure 1: The 2022-23 UHI Aurorans holding their certificates at the your Future in HE development day in the Assembly Rooms in Edinburgh, in April 2023.*

*From left to right: Susan Szymborski-Welsh, Dani Woods, Heather Fotheringham, Gillian Ford, Hollie Drever, and Mairi Cowan.*

## 1 Introduction

Following successful engagement in the Aurora Programme over the last five years, the university is funding up to six places on the 2023-24 Aurora Programme. Funding will cover the cost of the programme which will be delivered fully online and will run from October 2023 to March 2024.

## 2 About AdvanceHE Aurora leadership development programme

Aurora is AdvanceHE's leadership development programme for those identifying as women. Aimed at those in academic and professional services roles, the programme brings together leadership experts and higher education institutions to take positive action to address the under-representation of women in leadership positions in the sector.

Since its launch in 2013, more than 8,300 women from over 200 different institutions across the UK and Ireland have participated.

*"Aurora seeks to support women and their institutions to fulfil their leadership potential through thought-provoking activities, collaborative problem-solving activities and motivating stories supported by inspirational women role models. Participation embeds strong networks of early-career women across the sector to share best practice, insights and experiences."*<sup>1</sup>

Further details of the programme, including an overview, who Aurora is for and how it works can be found on the [Advance HE Aurora web pages](#). Programme participants are asked to:

- attend the introduction webinar which will introduce the aims and objectives of Aurora along with an inspirational guest speaker
- attend each of the four development days, and the two action learning set days
- undertake self-directed learning throughout Aurora, aligned with development interests
- commit to working with a mentor who is provided by their institution
- be prepared to access leadership opportunities and champion for change.

## 3 Programme Delivery format

In addition to the online development day sessions, and to ensure there is ample networking time for Aurorans, there are a number of [Aurora Online Enhancements](#) as optional networking opportunities. The feedback from last year's UHI Aurorans was that these sessions were valuable and enjoyable.

## 4 University's engagement with the Aurora Programme

The university's engagement with the Aurora Programme is managed by the Learning and Teaching Academy. The programme is now an integral part of the LTA's wider commitment to building

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/programmes-events/aurora#days>

educational leadership capacity across the university and to encourage those who identify as women to apply for leadership roles. Engagement also contributes to the institutional action plans relating to the Athena Swan Bronze Award and the Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming.

Support and guidance throughout and beyond the programme will be provided by the LTA. This support takes the form of one-to-one advice, facilitation of group sessions and networking opportunities with existing UHI Aurorans and Champions across the university.

A key part of the Aurora Programme is provided through mentoring. Programme participants will be asked to register for the [University Mentoring Scheme](#) and through this scheme will be matched with a suitable mentor. On completion of the programme, participants will be expected to become a mentor for future participants on the Aurora programme.

## 5 Previous participants' feedback

During the last five years, thirty-three participants from across the university have completed the programme and have been highly positive of their experiences. The quotes below highlight their feedback on the programme:

*"The programme exceeded my expectations. Learning points were gleaned from conversations and hints and tips discussed with colleagues and by programme speakers."*

*"It was fantastic to meet like-minded colleagues from the UHI and across Scotland and I feel that the programme has given me more confidence to apply for a leadership role in the future."*

*"Excellent programme with inspiring development days packed with information and leads to support further learning."*

*"I'm delighted to have been part of the AURORA programme. It has given me the confidence going forward to step up and take the lead, as I feel like I have hundreds of inspirational women behind me all the way, saying "You're in Charge!"*

*"... I have a better understanding of my guiding principles and I know I can work in an authentic way to demonstrate my leadership capability and challenge the status quo."*

*"The Aurora programme has given me back my career, provided me with some very valuable leadership skills and most importantly helped me create a strong network base which I know I can rely on whatever the future may bring".*

Since completing the programme, participants have continued to develop their leadership aspirations and capabilities and have successfully contributed to events and initiatives including the university's International Women's Day celebrations, the annual Educational Leadership Symposium and the University's Women's Network.

## 6 Application form and submission deadline

Application forms can be downloaded from the [LTA Aurora webpage](#). Completed applications should be submitted by email to the Learning and Teaching Academy ([LTA@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:LTA@uhi.ac.uk)) no later than **noon on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> September 2023**.

## 7 Selection criteria

Applicants will be considered on the evidence submitted in their application form. Applicants will be expected to provide evidence in their application form to demonstrate how they meet the following criteria:

- Identify as a woman
- Hold an academic or professional role at grade up to senior lecturer or professional services equivalent
- Available to attend all the seven interlinked development and action learning set days for the 2023-24 Scotland Aurora programme as shown below. The first UHI session is intended to introduce you to your fellow Aurorans:

UHI intro welcome webinar	Wed 27 <sup>th</sup> Sep 2023	MS teams	1200-1300
AdvanceHE Intro webinar	Wed 4 <sup>th</sup> Oct 2023	Zoom	1000-1230
Identity, influence & voice	Thurs 12 <sup>th</sup> Oct 2023	Zoom	1000-1500
Core leadership	Wed 1 <sup>st</sup> Nov 2023	Zoom	1000-1500
Action learning set #1	Tues 14 <sup>th</sup> Nov 2023	Zoom	1000-1500
Politics & Influence	Thurs 7 <sup>th</sup> Dec 2023	Zoom	1000-1500
Adaptive leadership styles	Thurs 18 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2024	Zoom	1000-1500
<b>Your future in HE</b>	<b>Thurs 29<sup>th</sup> Feb 2024</b>	<b>Edinburgh</b>	<b>0930-1600</b>
Action learning set #2	Thurs 14 <sup>th</sup> Mar 2024	Delegates Self-host	1000-1500

- Able to strongly evidence, in their application form:
  - current aspiration or experience of developing their leadership potential
  - potential opportunities to influence or lead others in their current role
- Commitment to developing leadership capacity within the university following the programme
- Willingness to participate in the [University Mentoring Scheme](#), initially as a mentee and, on completion of the programme, as a mentor for colleagues aspiring to develop their leadership capabilities.

In addition, applicants are asked to ensure their line manager is aware of the programme expectations; particularly the time required to attend the programme sessions and is supportive of their application. A statement of support from a line manager, referring to the aims and expectations of the Aurora programme, is required as part of the application.

## 8 Selection process and outcomes

Applications will be considered by a selection panel made up of institutional Aurora Champions and those nominated by them to participate in the panel process. The selection panel will meet in mid-

September and applicants will be notified of the results by email shortly after the selection decisions have been made.

## 9 Queries

If you have any queries about the programme or the application and selection process, please contact Debbie Wartnaby by emailing [debbie.wartnaby@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:debbie.wartnaby@uhi.ac.uk), Jane Steele by emailing [Jane.steele@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:Jane.steele@uhi.ac.uk) or via the LTA by emailing [lta@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:lta@uhi.ac.uk).

## 10 LTA & AdvanceHE Aurora Programme Privacy Statement

Please read the privacy notice for the LTA funded initiatives which relates directly to the Aurora Programme (LTA Scholarship, Aurora Programme, Staff Development Fund) and which can be found on the [Privacy notices for LTA activities webpage](#). If you can any questions or concerns, please contact the [LTA](#).