# The University Mentoring Scheme

**Quarterly Newsletter**
**Newsletter #4**



This is a mentoring newsletter for colleagues who are registered as a mentor and/or mentee on the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) 'University Mentoring Scheme'. You can unsubscribe from the newsletter at any time.

In this newsletter:

- **Announcements!:** one-off announcements.
- **Spotlight on Mentoring**: news and resources to develop and support your mentoring practice.
- **Mentoring Strand Updates:** information and updates from the mentoring strand leads.
- **Standard Newsletter Items**: information and guidance to keep your mentoring partnerships on track.

Colleagues are encouraged to forward the newsletter to any colleagues or teams who might be interested in engaging in mentoring activity trough the scheme.

## Announcements

# A note from Professor Neil Simco

Our mentoring schemes for both research and scholarship are really important part of our research environment across UHI, and I would like to acknowledge the contribution of both mentors and mentees to this work. At its best the quality of the mentor-mentee relationship, discharged over 6 months or a year brings clear and lasting benefits to both.

We know that mentoring can be of benefit to a wide range of researchers, from those returning to research, academic staff generally, staff who support research students and more experienced research staff looking to engage in critical reflection. The opportunity, for example, for early career researchers to hone research skills, whether it be around grant capture or publishing early papers is second to none, whist for mentors the process of discussing key elements of the 'craft' of the researcher can be a rewarding and enduring process of critical reflection. Looking at it from an institutional perspective, there is no doubt that our mentoring schemes are a major part of the foundation for the next generation of researchers, and this is really important not just for individuals but also for UHI as an institution and the quality of our research environment. This is in itself important as looking ahead to the next REF, there is no doubt that the assessment of the research environment will be even more significant than in REF 2021
.
Thank you once again to all who are involved in leading, administering and engaging in this rewarding and important work!

**Professor Neil Simco** | **An t-Àrd-Ollamh Niall Simco**
**Interim Deputy Principal (tertiary and research)**
**Iar-Phrionnsapal eadar-amail (treas-ìre agus**
*rannsachadh)*

## Mentoring Residential: Save the date and book your place

We are keen to explore if there is still an appetite for our two-day residential which we previously held in 2018 and 2019. The residential provides the opportunity to come together in person (previously in Inverness) to develop mentoring approaches with internal and external facilitators, and to network with others engaged in mentoring through the mentoring scheme.

**The dates that we have held for the residential are 26 - 27 April 2023**

The residential will be open to mentors and registered mentees who are interested in becoming mentors on the scheme.

Please email mentoring@uhi.ac.uk if you would like to express your interest to attend.

*"I really enjoyed everything about the mentoring residential. The networking links, the commonalities and of course the practical workshops have all been so helpful to me. I already have future plans – based on the two days, both pedagogically and professionally. Great stuff!" (previous participant)*

## Spotlight

## Resource spotlight: Active listening model

Active listening is at the core of mentoring competencies. The 7 key active listening skills model (Center for Creative Leadership) outlines the seven stages of active listening. We explore all of these through the UHI mentoring development workshops.

To download this model and other mentoring resources join the Mahara Mentoring group.



COACHING OTHERS

7 KEY ACTIVE LISTENING SKILLS

1. Be attentive.
2. Ask open-ended questions.
3. Ask probing questions.
4. Request clarification.
5. Paraphrase.
6. Be attuned to and reflect feelings.
7. Summarize.

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Center for Creative Leadership

## Mentoring spotlight: Lesley Mickel



**Dr Lesley Mickel is the Programme Leader for UHI Drama at UHI Inverness and mentors through the Scholarship Development Strand.**

**How did you first become engaged with the University Mentoring Scheme?**
I was approached by the LTA two years ago and asked to take on the role of scholarship mentor, drawing on my own experience of research leading to outputs such as conference papers and articles in peer reviewed journals.

**What has been your mentoring highlight so far?**
Difficult to identify a single highlight. I have mentored three colleagues to date and found all of these experiences enlightening. The initial conversation around the mentee's targets and how they might resolve challenges allows for creative thinking around research strategies and modes of communication. It's always fascinating to learn about another discipline, its perspectives and approaches to research and problem solving – and discovering shared territory as well as new ways of looking at things. It's a learning experience for the mentor as well as the mentee!

**Has engaging in the mentoring scheme led to any unexpected benefits, could you tell us more?**
I have found the LTA mentoring workshops really helpful. As a mentor, I want to help, and this can lead to an enthusiastic sharing of my ideas regarding how the scholarship should proceed – but this can prevent the mentee's own ideas from

evolving. The LTA workshops have helped me to focus on active listening skills, offering suggestions or responses rather than instructions as to how the research should proceed. So, mentoring has allowed me to learn more about cognate discipline areas as well as improving my own communication skills.

**What one piece or advice or resource would you share with other mentor/mentees on the scheme for successful mentoring partnerships?**
Stagger feedback rather than delivering it all once to avoid the mentee feeling overwhelmed.

| Learning and Teaching Enhancement | Professional Recognition | Research | Scholarship Development |
|---|---|---|---|
| Supporting colleagues to enhance their practice in learning and teaching, and supporting learning and teaching. | Supporting colleagues to achieve professional recognition in Learning and Teaching. | Supporting colleagues to undertake disciplinary research, publish and achieve funding. | Supporting colleagues to engage in scholarship activities to disseminate and share their own practice and expertise. |
| **Register** | **Register** | **Register** | **Register** |

**For general enquiries please email mentoring@uhi.ac.uk**

## Mentoring Strand Updates

### Learning and Teaching Enhancement

**Strand Lead: Debbie Wartnaby**
debbie.wartnaby@uhi.ac.uk



Following a successful Personal Academic Tutor (PAT) development day in August, several colleagues registered on the Learning and Teaching Enhancement (L&TE) Strand to receive mentoring support. It is great to see a demand for mentoring among the PAT community.  However, to meet the demand we invite more colleagues to register as mentors on the scheme, as we don't currently have enough mentors enrolled to support all of the registered PAT mentees.  If you can help and would like to mentor then please register on the strand. Your experience and skills are vital to help others navigate the PAT role, and to reflect on and develop their practice.  Mentors are fully supported in the role and no previous mentoring experience is needed.  A keen interest to support and develop others and the ability to keep conversations confidential is a great starting point in which to develop your

mentoring approaches!  Furthermore, mentors registered on the mentoring scheme report many mutual benefits of mentoring, including networking, sense of belonging, professional reflection and development of own practice.

Mentoring on this strand is not just for PATs and academic staff. The strand is open to colleagues who have a role supporting learning and teaching
If you want to have a chat about it first, please do not hesitate to contact the L&TE Strand lead, in confidence of course, at mentoring@uhi.ac.uk

## Learning and Teaching Enhancement

## Professional Recognition

**Strand Lead: Alex Walker**
alex.walker@uhi.ac.uk



Since the last newsletter there have been a number of colleagues recognised for their excellent practice, and who have been supported through the Professional Recognition Strand:

Andy Brown, Head of Corporate Systems Compliance and Lindsay Snodgrass, Vice Principal – Student Experience & Quality at UHI Inverness were supported by the LTA through mentoring and guidance to submit applications directly to Advance HE for Principal Fellowship HEA (PFHEA).  Both Andy and Lindsay achieved PFHEA status on first submission, a great achievement and recognition of their strategic leadership!

Dr Leah Macaden won a National Teaching Fellowship (NTF) by submitting an application to Advance HE for consideration.  The NTFS awards are highly competitive with just 54 awarded across the HE sector. Leah was supported through mentoring from an external critical friend and was recognised for her excellent contribution and practice in dementia education.

Andy Blackall, EDU Instructional Designer recieved mentor support through the strand, and was successfull in renewing his Certified Membership of the Association of Learning Teachnology (CMALT) through submitting a portfolio to the Association for Learning Technology (ALT) for review.

The university supported a number of colleagues at the Royal University of Bhutan (RUB) to submit applications directly to Advance HE for HEA Fellowships.  As well as workshops and guidance, a number of colleagues supported applicants through mentoring.  To date seven RUB colleagues have been recognised with fellowship on first admission.  A specail thanks to Kerry Hannigan (UHI Perth), Scott Timpany

(Orkney College) and John Howe (SAMS UHI) for supporting RUB colleagues through mentoring.

Many congratulations to all mentioned and many thanks to the mentors for supporting these important professional recognitions.

This academic year I hope that we can continue to offer mentoring to support a number of professional recognitions including PFHEA, HEA Fellowships, NTFS and the Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence (CATE) and CMALT.

## Professional Recognition



### Research

**Strand Lead: Professor Finlo Cottier**
finlo.cottier@sams.ac.uk
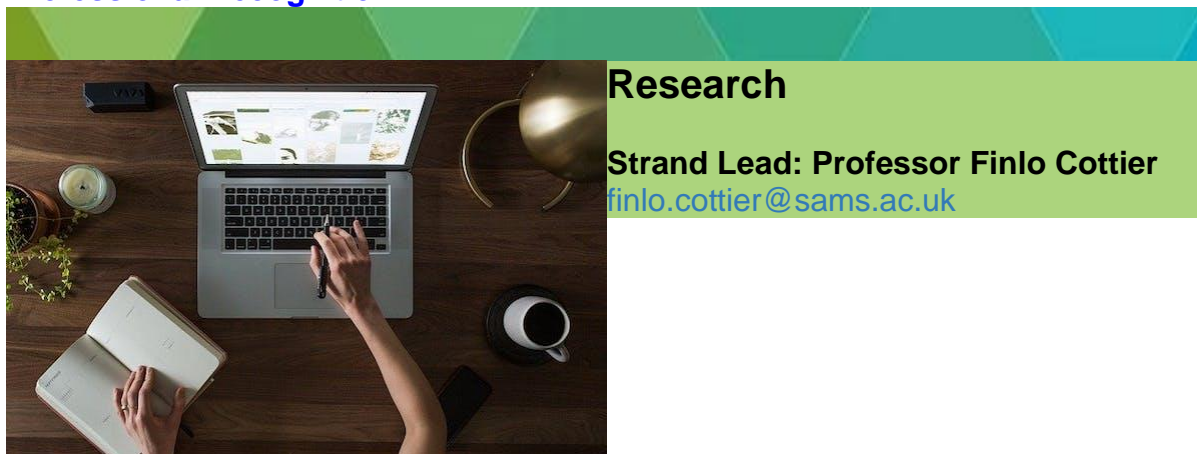
There is steady development of the research strand with both new mentors and mentees signing up with diverse mentoring needs and experience. The aim is to have a deep pool of mentors that the research community of UHI can draw upon

Mentoring is becoming increasingly recognised as contributing to the rich research environment that we have at UHI. We are seeing more staff offering to be mentors who are in relatively early stages of their career, perhaps at post-doctoral level. This is hugely valuable as those mentors potentially have the most recent experience to share with mentees setting out on a research career. So don't underestimate your value as a mentor based on your career stage.

Over the winter I hope to talk more directly to Academic Partners with research staff to explore the benefits for them of the mentoring scheme. If you're keen to develop mentoring within your campus please get in touch.

## Research Mentoring

### Scholarship Development

**Strand Lead: Dr Heather Fotheringham**
heather.fotheringham@uhi.ac.uk

This strand of the mentoring scheme sits within the LTA's broader work to support the development of scholarship amongst our staff. Activity for 2022-23 is based around the two themes of **Open Scholarship** and **Reflective Practice**. We have already held a successful workshop on developing an an online presence to network and disseminate your academic practice with the following events also scheduled for semester 1:

- **Open Scholarship webinars**: 05 October 2022: Why Open Scholarship is good for you and your career Hardy Schwamm, National University of Ireland, Galway
- **Reflective writing workshops:** 7 October Introduction to reflective writing, 17 November Writing for a range of audiences, 08 December Writing to disseminate perspectives

We have also connected with the Graduate School to encourage our postgraduate community to engage with scholarship development. Please contact Heather Fotheringham if there are interested groups at your Academic Partner who would benefit from mentoring in this area and would like to hear more.

**Scholarship Development**



## Standard Newsletter Items

**Mentee evaluation**

When you have reach the end of your mentoring partnership please complete this survey: https://uhi.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/university-mentoring-scheme-mentee-feedback-2

**Haven't heard from your mentor/mentee?**

Mentees should make the initial contact with their mentor as soon as possible once the match is confirmed, even just to say hello! If you have been matched with a mentee or mentor who hasn't made initial contact/responded to your contact then please let the mentoring team know at mentoring@uhi.ac.uk so that we can make contact with your mentee/mentor.

**Haven't got a mentee/mentor?**

We are working on building up our pool of mentees/mentors. When a suitable mentee becomes available we will match you and you will receive an automated email to confirm. If you have someone in mind that you would like to be matched with, and who might not be registered on the scheme, please let us know at mentoring@uhi.ac.uk.  There are many great potential mentors at UHI who might not realise they have mentor potential, and we often have to invite registrations from individuals who we know would make great mentors!

**Coming to the end of your mentoring match?**

Please remember to inform the mentoring team at mentoring@uhi.ac.uk when you have reached the end of your mentoring partnership. It is important that we know so that we can update Sumac and terminate the partnership in the system. If you are a mentor, at this point if you find that you aren't able to mentor another colleague please let the mentoring scheme team know so that we can change your status to 'unavailable' in the sumac system.

Consider also exploring the other strands on the scheme and contact strand leads if you would like more information on another strand.

**Struggling to reach the end…..**

Ideally, your mentoring partnership shouldn't last longer than 6 – 12 months (there are exceptions). By then goals agreed upon at the beginning of the mentoring partnership should have been reached, or your mentee should feel confident to work on reaching those goals. At the 3 or 6 month mark (or half way through the agreed time) arrange a 'progress update meeting' to explore the goals that were made at the beginning of the match (recorded on the mentoring agreement form) and agree to a date by which the mentoring match will come to an end and help the mentee consider how to either reach those goals in that time or identify the support they require after the match has come to an end.

Occasionally you may find that the mentoring partnership isn't working out as you and/or your mentee hoped, please let us know at mentoring@uhi.ac.uk if this is the case.

View the Mentoring Code of Practice for more guidance.

**Mentoring Agreement Form**

Please complete the mentoring agreement form at your first or second meeting and return it to mentoring@uhi.ac.uk. This helps us to know when your mentoring match began.

**Briefing session**

We strongly encourage mentors and mentees to attend a briefing session once registered on the scheme. This session led by the mentoring strand lead will explain how mentors and mentees are matched, the mentoring timeline, and the expectations and support available to mentors and mentees. It also provides you with the opportunity to ask questions or raise concerns you have. Please liaise with the mentoring lead for the strand that you register.

If you have any questions about this newsletter or if you would like to contribute to the next newsletter please email mentoring@uhi.ac.uk