




Welcome to this month's *in partnership*. In this new look edition we showcase best practices from around the sector, look forward to all the exciting member benefits in the coming months and get to know a little bit more about some of the fantastic people working at Advance HE.

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As always we welcome
your feedback.

Please contact your
membership contact or email
memberships@advance-he.ac.uk
with any ideas or content
you would like featured.

Member Benefits

This month we showcase a new member benefit project launch and showcase a new report exploring trends amongst sustainable institutions.

Decoding Pastoral Support project launched

How do 'care' or 'pastoral support' activities contribute to core strategic outcomes in higher education?

Sarah Hubbard, Senior Consultant (Leadership, Organisational Development and Research) at Advance HE, and Dr Liz Brewster from Lancaster University, introduce a new member benefit on decoding and defining support in HE organisations.

In an increasingly relentless, challenging and competitive higher education environment dealing with the many after-effects of Covid 19, 'support' continues to be the balm that is applied when resilience is depleted.

Whilst often a key ingredient in ensuring student and colleague retention, performance and improved wellbeing, responses to the Advance HE Leadership Survey suggested it as an area lacking in institutional focus. Notably, academic and professional services colleagues working in academic departments to deliver learning and teaching, provide support to students which is often hidden. This contribution is unaccounted for in terms of time, personal cost and more structurally in relation to workload, reward and recognition.

In the next phase of this research, we will be holding online focus groups on Monday 11 and Thursday 14 March 2024 with academic and professional services colleagues working in academic departments, who identify with the activities or role of 'support-giver' to students or colleagues.

Please register your interest for these focus groups or to receive further updates on the findings of the research.

MEMBER
BENEFIT

This project is part of the Growing the HE workforce of the future global theme. You can find out more information on the other work going on in this space [here](#).

What's coming up...

The Sustainable Institutions Project: An Evidence Informed Review of Good Practice dissemination webinar.

Thursday 29 February 2024 | 12:30 – 13:30

What progress are universities making in becoming sustainable institutions? A lot of work on sustainability is in silos, and there is untapped potential aligning activity in teaching, research, estates and engagement. We will share the headline findings from an evidence-based review of current practice: a systematic literature review and five detailed case studies.

These are Cardiff Metropolitan University, Falmouth University, Wageningen University, Deakin University, and University of Sharjah.

[You can read the report here.](#)

[Book your place.](#)

AI and Employability – What's happening beyond our walls? Booking link now live.

The project will investigate how two groups of stakeholders anticipate the impact of AI on their respective sectors and what HEIs can do to prepare for the changing demands and opportunities that AI will bring in terms of student employability.

Webinar 1: The Industry Perspective – Thursday 7 March 2024 10 - 11:30 GMT

[Book your place for Webinar 1.](#)

Envison-ED: Where becoming is at the heart of education.

This project will support educators to reflect on how they can guide students through their own academic and personal/professional journeys, emphasising growth and self-empowerment necessary for agency.

Open Forum 1 - Tuesday 5 March, 11:30 - 12:45. [Find out more.](#)

Get Involved

HE is nothing without its people. Below are all the ways you can get involved and share your outstanding work with us and the wider sector.

Innovative Practice Grants are open for applications

Advance HE's new Innovative Practice Grants are designed to support our Small, Specialist, Independent and College-Based HE members from within the UK in sharing good practice and impactful initiatives through small grant funding for case studies.

Grants of £500 will be awarded to successful applicants from Advance HE Small, Specialist, independent and College-Based HE member institutions to provide short case studies of recent practice (750-1000 words) that align to the core themes.

- + Innovations in teaching and learning
- + Building inclusion and belonging
- + Engaging leadership

[Find out more here.](#)



AI Garage – Creating the Future Now

Artificial intelligence is rapidly changing the practice of universities in many ways, from enhancing teaching and learning to automating administration and research.

Many colleagues across the sector are experimenting and innovating in their practice at speed, following the principle of 'garage' innovation. This project aims to capture and share cutting-edge innovation practices in universities now and inspire others to join the AI revolution.

We invite members to share their innovative practices across a range of identified themes (including employability, research capability building, and student support), and we will use these to identify snapshots of leading practice and conclude with a reflective report that indicates the key themes and developments that have been highlighted and what this means for the sector.

[Read the introductory blog.](#)

[Share your case study and explore the current submissions to the garage here.](#)

Advance HE's Collaborative Development Fund 2023-24

Nine universities awarded grants from Advance HE's Collaborative Development Fund.

[Learn more.](#)

Member Spotlight



MEMBER
BENEFIT

Joining forces to boost impact

Following the launch of the joint research strategy from the Agricultural Universities Council (AUC), Professor Tom MacMillan, Elizabeth Creak Chair at the Royal Agricultural University, shares how by working together, universities plan to rise to the challenges facing food and farming.

Right now, agriculture is in transition globally. Whether it's technology, subsidies, changing diets or weather patterns, farmers are adapting to a rapidly changing world. And there's a lot at stake. Farmers are custodians of large swathes of our land, they're responsible for our food security and for restoring habitats. Much rests on their shoulders.

This is why agricultural research is more vital than ever. We need research to generate evidence, explore possibilities and enable innovation. Crucially, it should address the challenges that farmers are facing right now, as well as into the future. But while UK science is seen as world-leading, farmers and other stakeholders have longstanding concerns about the impact of publicly-funded agricultural research.

Joining forces

Recognising that we could do more, 16 universities that teach and research agriculture came together to form the Agricultural Universities Council (AUC). Alongside strategic research institutes, the universities represented by the AUC deliver the lion's share of agricultural research in the UK. While we team up on projects all the time, this was the first time we had come together as a whole sector.

After almost a year of research, planning and engaging stakeholders, in May 2023, the AUC launched our [joint research strategy](#). Our report sets out new steps we are taking to join up our research and strengthen the difference it makes on the ground. These include working with farming networks to get an up-to-date, sector-wide picture of research priorities, coordinating how we share evidence, and training the next generation of scientists with the skills to research complex, real-world farming systems.

A fresh approach

Rather than produce a wish list of recommendations for others, we have set out the actions we are taking ourselves, or planning, as a result of this process.

The strategy responds to the major challenges and changes facing agriculture and sets out to prioritise wisely, avoid duplication and boost the practical impact and public value of research. This kind of joined-up working has proved tricky over the years because, rightly, research is independent and decentralised. What we hope is refreshing about this approach is that the universities have recognised we have a shared responsibility and we're teaming up and taking the initiative where we can.

What's happened since the launch?

Since the launch, the AUC has already made progress on many of these recommendations.

AUC educators retreat

In July 2023, we held a four-day retreat for nearly every agriculture degree programme leads in the country. It was a chance to share best practice, hear from many excellent speakers, and build a library of learning resources to help keep courses up to date with rapid agricultural advances. The participants formed a teaching and learning group and have pulled together around 30 presentations packed with links to videos, case studies, up-to-date best practice guidance and how-to guides, which are available for all on the [Farm PEP](#) knowledge exchange platform.

[Read more](#)

Advance HE Spotlight

Each month we share a little more information about the different people across the Advance HE team, that support our members. This month, we introduce our UK Equality Charters Team.

Dr Ruth Gilligan, Assistant Director UK Equality Charters

Team members with job titles: The team is led by Dr Ruth Gilligan (Assistant Director Equality Charters) overseeing the strategic delivery and development of the Charters. Led by Anne Mwangi (Head of the Race Equality Charter) and Dani Glazzard (Head of Athena Swan), the REC and Athena Swan teams provide expert advice and strategic guidance to members on matters of race and gender equality: George Brown, Richard Stewart, Sally Baden, Tara Leach and Tinashe Verhaeghe are the Senior Advisers helping members to identify and achieve their equality priorities through their Charter activities.

The Charters Assessment team, led by Paul Waltham (Senior Charters Assessment Manager) are responsible for the delivery and quality assurance of the assessment policies and processes: Clare Merritt, Jamie Emerson and Jane Iddon are the Charters Assessment Managers applying their expertise in assessment to maintain and enhance a world-class and professional peer-review service. The Operations team, led by Liz Prance (Lead Executive, Operations) provides administrative and operational support, ensuring that all panel meetings, developmental reviews and a host of other Charter processes are delivered smoothly: Anna Park, Kate Allott, Tanya Chapman and Tom Smith are the Charters Co-ordinators carrying out this vital work.

What I do/the team does: Advance HE's Equality Charters are catalysts and frameworks for change – supporting institutions to understand their gender and race equality issues and priorities, and take action to transform their cultures and make an impact on the lives of staff and students. In addition to delivering the peer-review assessment of over 170 Charter applications every year, UK Equality Charters work includes providing expert advice and guidance, hosting events, and facilitating networking and peer-learning. We are a team of 17 passionate and dedicated colleagues and while many of us have particular areas of specialist expertise, we work across both the Athena Swan and Race Equality Charters and often operate in a matrix management style.

How I/we can support you: Whether you have questions or concerns regarding your Charter application, would like advice or guidance on your race and gender equality priorities and activities, or are just interested in enhancing your knowledge and practice, we are here to help!

- + Learn from innovative practice across the sector by attending one of our Enhancing Practice Events. Our next events focus on 'race equality and positive action in recruitment' (Feb 2024), 'caring responsibilities and gender equality in HE' (June 2024) and 'trans and non-binary inclusion' (March 2024).
- + Share your gender and race equality challenges and good practice at one of our Online Networking Events and learn from each other. The themes of our next events are 'identifying your issues' (Feb 2024), 'developing your action plan' (April 2024) and 'exploring progress and success' (May 2024).



Advance HE Spotlight

- + Institutional-level contacts can arrange a call with a member of the team who can offer strategic advice and guidance on your race and gender equality work.
- + Take up a developmental review of your draft application (free for institutional-level applications, once per cycle) or a mid-award or mid-application review meeting between your institutional SAT and a member of our team.
- + Connect with the Charters community of practice in our dedicated Charter spaces on Advance HE Connect

A little bit about me/the team:

1. Across the team we have more than a cumulative 210 years of experience in higher education and EDI.
2. We have a huge variety of personal interests and hobbies, including: butterfly meditation, cycling, mushroom growing, cold water swimming, dancing, sewing, arts and crafts, climbing and more...
3. Between us, we have visited over 50 countries for personal and business travel and speak 8 languages.



Ways to contact the team, including social media:

You can engage with us and others across the sector on our Connect networks:

[Athena Swan Members Network:](#)

[Race Equality Charter Members Network:](#)

You can also reach us directly via email at athena.swan@advance-he.ac.uk and racecharter@advance-he.ac.uk.



Other News from Advance HE

As a member, you might be interested in one of the development opportunities, project updates or events.

Advance HE publishes new framework for enhancing assessment in higher education):

A revised framework published by Advance HE will help to enhance assessment in today's dynamic and ever-changing world of higher education. [Find out more.](#)

Milestone appointment for Advance HE in Australasia



Fiona Whittenbury is Advance HE's first Head of Partnerships based in the Australasia region.. [Read more.](#)

New podcast series exploring the evolution of governance in higher education

Advance HE is celebrating 20 years of supporting governance effectiveness in higher education. [Read more.](#)

The changing face of governance
An Advance HE podcast



Advance HE publishes latest edition of employability case study series

The fifth publication of case studies linked to Advance HE's Employability Symposia is now available for Advance HE members to download. [Find out more.](#)

Shape In Partnership

This publication is created by Advance HE to support our members, and we want to hear from you. Complete this **2 minute survey** to share your feedback or to tell us what you do and don't want to see in the InPartnership newsletter.

[Share your thoughts.](#)

Showcase your Success Stories

We would like to hear from you about your good practice and impact, thought-leadership from across the sector or satisfaction of Advance HE products or services. We are open to all ideas and in any format, whether that be a blog, a podcast, a video, or a case study. We will work with you to get your unique story published in In Partnership.

If you would like to be featured in 'In Partnership', please contact us [here](#).

