

# Staff Learning and Career Development NEWSLETTER



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Dear colleague,

**Welcome to this month's edition of our staff newsletter.**

As we approach the end of another busy academic year, we are gradually winding down to the summer and holiday period. While things may be slowing down on workshop provision, planning is already in full swing behind the scenes as we look ahead to the new academic year.

We're also pleased to announce that applications for the Aurora Leadership Programme are now open—an exciting opportunity for women in leadership to develop their potential and grow professionally. Don't miss out!

## **The Organisational Effectiveness and Development Team**

### Upcoming Workshops and Events

This section provides details of our shorter/bite-size courses, events and one-day workshops:

#### **For new starters:**

- [Headington Campus tour](#), Tuesday 12 August, 10.00am - 11.00am, in-person

#### **For line managers:**

- [Conflict resolution skills for managers](#), Wednesday 9 July, 9.30am - 4.30pm, in-person
- [Creating psychological safety in your team](#), Wednesday 23 July, 9.30am - 4.30pm, in-person
- [Wellbeing conversations in the workplace](#), Wednesday 23 July, 10.00am - 11.00am, online
- [Mental health - one day for line managers](#), Tuesday 5 August, 9.00am - 5.00pm, online

#### **For colleagues:**

##### **Essential Skills**

- [Courageous conversations](#), Wednesday 9 July, 1.00pm - 3.30pm, online

##### **Individual Wellbeing:**

- [Mental Health aware workshop](#), Tuesday 8 July, 9.00am - 1.00pm, online
- [Budgeting and money management](#), Monday 28 July, 2.00pm - 4.00pm, online
- [Mental Health first aid](#), Monday 10 November, 9.00am - 2.00pm, online

You can also find details via the [list](#) of upcoming workshops and events.

## Aurora - Applications now open



The Aurora Programme is an Advance HE initiative designed to encourage more women to move into leadership positions in HE. It is aimed at women up to senior lecturer level or professional equivalent, who are ambitious for a career in the sector and want to explore leadership as one option for progression. More information can be found on the [Advance HE website](#).

The specific cohort details for 2025-26 have now been finalised by Advance HE. To apply, send a completed copy of the Application form to [staff-learning@brookes.ac.uk](mailto:staff-learning@brookes.ac.uk). All applications must be received by 5.00pm on 15 August 2025 or by 5.00pm on 25 July if applying for the early bird discount. Further information about the programme and the application form can be found on our [Aurora web page](#).

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## New Managers Induction - Supporting Managers from Day One



We're excited to launch our new Manager Induction, designed specifically for managers who are new to Oxford Brookes. This tailored introduction equips leaders with the knowledge, tools, and connections they need to thrive in their role from day one. The programme includes the following courses:

- [Creating good days at work - your role](#)
- [Recruitment and selection: information for panel members](#)
- [Manager's Induction - other things you need to know](#)
- [Performance development review \(PDR\)](#)
- [Leadership and Management Framework](#)

All managers who joined the organisation **on or after 23 January** will be automatically assigned this learning as part of their onboarding journey.

**New: 5-Minute Focus - One subject. Five minutes. More effective you.**

Each month, we'll highlight one practical article, tool, or tip from our [MindTools catalogue](#) - Great if you're curious, short on time, or just want to try something new. Whether you're looking to build confidence, manage time better, or develop your leadership skills, there's always something useful to explore.

Off the back of Wellness Week in June, we thought we'd continue the theme of mental health and wellbeing in our first 5-minute focus.

**This month's pick: Overcoming Pessimistic Thinking: A Simple Tool for Challenging Unhelpful Thoughts**

In times of uncertainty or change, it's natural for our thinking to become more cautious, critical, or even pessimistic. While this is a normal response to a challenge, it can sometimes tip into unhelpful patterns that affect our decision-making, confidence and overall wellbeing.

If you've ever found yourself thinking things like *"I always get things wrong"* or *"This will never improve,"* you're not alone. But these kinds of thoughts, if left unchallenged, can shape how we feel and respond, not just to a single event, but also to future opportunities.

MindTools has a short video resource called [Overcoming Pessimistic Thinking](#), which introduces the **ABC technique**—a simple, practical tool to help spot and shift unhelpful thinking patterns. The video also comes with reflective questions and a downloadable template to help you apply the technique in real-life situations.

By learning to recognise the thoughts we have in response to a difficult situation and reflect on whether they're grounded or overly negative, we can begin to challenge them, building a more constructive and optimistic mindset.

There are further resources available in the Positive Thinking and Mindset section of the [Strengthening Personal Resources area](#) in Staff Learning. The Employee Assistance Programme also offers Online Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) - further details can be found on the [EAP Google site](#).

## Headington Campus Tours



Are you new to Oxford Brookes or Headington Campus? Would you like to meet a student ambassador?

Come and join our [campus tour!](#) Our next one is running on 12 August 2025 (10.00am - 11.00am). We look forward to meeting you.

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## PDR Review - we'd still love to hear your views

As shared in the previous edition, we are reviewing our approach to the PDR over the coming months. We have just completed a series of engagement sessions for both reviewees and reviewers. Thank you to those who attended.

**We have decided to extend the [short survey](#)** for a couple more weeks to give those who may have been unable to make the time previously to provide their feedback.

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## Online resources

Many of our learning and development resources are now online making them easier to access at a time and place that suits you. We have created dedicated areas on the Staff Learning platform to help you find the development that suits your needs:

- [Leadership and management](#)
- [Wellbeing and personal resources](#)
- [Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion](#)
- [Essential skills](#)
- [Risk and Compliance](#)
- [Professional and career development](#) (including [apprenticeships](#))
- [New starters](#)
- [Customer service](#)

## Keeping in touch

### **Learning and Organisational Development**

Email: [staff-learning@brookes.ac.uk](mailto:staff-learning@brookes.ac.uk)

Twitter: [@Staff Learning](https://twitter.com/Staff_Learning)

Website: <https://www.brookes.ac.uk/staff/people/teams/organisational-effectiveness-and-development>