

# Staff Learning and Career Development NEWSLETTER



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Dear colleague,

We're excited to share our very first solo newsletter. This edition is a special one, filled with exciting new workshops and opportunities to learn, connect, and grow. Whether you're looking to explore something new or build on your skills, we have plenty in store for you.

We can't wait for you to take a look—there's something for everyone!

**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 13 May, 1.00pm - 2.00pm
- [VCG New Starter Gathering event](#), Tuesday 3 June, 11.00am - 12.00pm

### For line managers:

- [Effective Career Conversations](#), Tuesday 29 April, 9.30am - 12.30pm and Thursday 12 June, 1.30pm - 4.30pm
- [Leading Change](#), Tuesday 3 June, 9.00am - 5.00pm
- [Mental health - one day for line managers](#), Wednesday 18 June, 9.00am - 5.00pm

### For colleagues:

#### Essential Skills

- [Mental health aware workshop](#), Monday 7 April, 1.00pm - 4.30pm
- [Enhancing Emotional Intelligence](#), Wednesday 23 April, 1.00pm - 3.30pm and Wednesday 11 June, 1.00pm - 3.30pm
- [Effective communication](#), Wednesday 7 May, 1.00pm - 3.30pm and Wednesday 25 June, 1.00pm - 3.30pm
- [Courageous conversations](#), Wednesday 21 May, 1.00pm - 3.30pm and Wednesday 9 July, 1.00pm - 3.00pm
- [Conflict resolution for employees](#) Thursday 19 June, 9.00am - 5.00pm

#### Career Development

- [Taking control of your career direction](#) Wednesday 7 May, 1.30pm - 4.30pm and Friday 13 June, 9.30am - 12.30pm
- [Discovering and using your strengths](#), Wednesday 30 April, 9.30am - 12.00pm

#### Individual Wellbeing:

- [Financial products and services](#), Monday 7 April, 10.00am - 11.00am
- [Budgeting and money management](#), Friday 9 May, 12.00pm - 2.00pm
- [Credit rating](#), Monday 12 May, 10.00am - 11.00am
- [One Shop - Stop!](#), Wednesday 14 May, 12.00pm - 1.30pm
- [Reframing negative thoughts](#), Thursday 15 May, 10.00am - 11.00am
- [Maximising income](#), Tuesday 20 May, 11.00am - 12.00pm
- [Red Flags and Rip Offs!](#), Wednesday 21 May, 10.00am - 11.30am

## Upcoming programmes:

This section provides details of our longer programmes which last for more than one day.

### For line managers:

- [The Collaborative Leader: Unlocking your leadership potential to navigate conflict and enhance collaboration](#), 12 June, 1 July, 18 July, 10.00am - 2.30pm (in person). **Deadline:** Friday 9 May, 5.00pm.
- [Building high-performing and resilient teams](#) 14 June, 18 June, 30 June, 16 July, 31 July, 11.00am - 2.30pm with a 30-minute lunch break. (Some sessions will be online, some will be in person)
- [Manager as Mediator](#) 9 June, 19 June, 8 July, 21 July and 29 July, 11.00am - 2.30pm with a 30-minute lunch break. (Some sessions will be online, some will be in person)

### For colleagues:

- [Hear and be heard: Fostering Respectful Dialogue and Collaboration](#), 17 June, 24 June, 3 July, 10 July, 10.00am - 1.30pm with a 30 minute break.

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

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## Career Development Workshops

To supplement our recently updated [Professional and Career Development Dashboard](#) in Staff Learning we are pleased to confirm the details of two workshops we are running with our partners Working Transitions. Working Transitions is an expert career service provider, experienced in supporting people change and career development programmes in organisations, including many universities, across the UK.



techniques to help employees identify their strengths, interests, and values and explore diverse career opportunities.

The [Effective Career Conversations](#) workshop is a half-day online workshop aimed at equipping line managers with the skills to conduct meaningful career conversations that drive both individual success and business growth. Participants will gain tools and techniques to guide career conversations effectively and develop basic coaching

[Taking control of your career direction](#) is a three-hour online workshop aimed at individuals at any stage of their career who need clarity to understand where their career is, and how to progress. Attendees will focus on their career motivators, strengths, and development areas. They will identify career blockers and learn practical strategies to overcome them. By the end, participants will have a personalised action plan and increased confidence in career decision-making.



We are running each of the workshops twice - see [upcoming workshops and events](#) for event details. These workshops are being run as a pilot so we will be actively seeking feedback to inform future iterations of the workshops.

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## Leadership and Management Development - New offer



The University's [Leadership and Management Framework](#) (LMF) defines what we are looking for from our leaders and managers. It also identifies the knowledge, skills and abilities that equip you to meet the various demands and expectations inherent in being a leader and manager.

Our [leadership and management development offer](#) provides opportunities for you to build and strengthen these. You can get a quick refresher on the framework by watching the [short videos in Staff Learning](#).

In the last edition, we provided details of our new [The Coaching Manager programme](#) which kicks off this week and promised you details of more new leadership and management development, so here it is!

### Our new offer:

For context, we are looking to provide a range of different options from our online offer to short/bite-size workshops, one-day skills-building sessions and more in-depth programmes. These programmes are aimed at providing opportunities for more in-depth experiential learning. They are also a great opportunity to meet other managers across the University to share your experiences and learn from each other.

## Self as Leader - New

Understanding your individual style and preferences and using this awareness effectively is an essential capability for effective leadership.

[The Collaborative Leader programme](#) will support participants in building awareness of their style and approach to work, how this might differ from others and how they can use this understanding to best support their teams through conflict and challenge to foster effective teamwork and a culture focused on collaboration and innovation.



This short in-person programme for line managers consists of three half-day sessions and includes the MBTI and TKI psychometrics. These provide participants with foundations for a deeper understanding of personal motivations and group interactions.

## Conflict Resolution - New

Interpersonal conflict can have negative implications not only for the individuals involved but also wider team effectiveness. Having the capability to effectively address and resolve conflict is therefore a key skill for managers and one that underpins the creation of a positive working environment. We are piloting two options to meet differing needs:



### [Conflict resolution skills for managers.](#)

This one-day 'intensive' course provides participants with key skills and approaches to help them manage their own and others' conflicts. It aims to increase participants' confidence to secure mutual solutions in difficult situations. It provides any manager with an essential tool in their toolkit.

[Manager as Mediator Programme](#) - This programme consists of five half-day sessions spread across a couple of months to provide participants an opportunity to reflect and embed their learning. It covers the subject area in more depth and equips participants to act as mediator between team members in conflict. This is likely to be of particular interest to managers who may currently be experiencing conflict within their teams.



We also have a new provision aimed at colleagues to support them - [Conflict Resolution for Employees.](#)



## Team Effectiveness - New

Enabling the effectiveness of your team is core to the role of a manager. Various research<sup>1</sup> has identified psychological safety as the key ingredient for high-performing, effective teams. It is also linked to individual fulfilment and wellbeing and more inclusive working environments. Central to the concept of psychological safety is the ability to sustain the sort of constructive conflict that leads to creativity, challenge and accountability. Psychological safety can represent a cultural shift for teams and for ourselves as managers, these courses are aimed at supporting this.



### [Creating Psychological Safety in your Team](#)

is a one-day immersion for those who are Ok with being open and working with vulnerability and conflict, including their own. The course offers practical skills, tools and resources to take away and apply.

### [The Building High-Performing & Resilient Teams Programme](#)

- This programme consists of five half-day sessions spread across a couple of months to provide participants an opportunity to reflect and embed their learning. The programme includes personal development work as well as a more in-depth focus on how to build psychological safety and address potential barriers. It may suit those who have tried to shift their team's culture and want ways to improve it further or have encountered obstacles and resistance.



## Supporting and Managing Effective Change - New

The ability to navigate, lead and support others through organisational change, is an increasingly important leadership capability.

[Leading Change](#) - We invite you to this dynamic, day-long workshop designed to elevate your leadership skills! You'll gain valuable insights into different leadership styles and how these need to be used strategically to get the best out of others with unique roles within your teams.



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<sup>1</sup> Duhigg, C. (2016) What Google Learned From Its Quest to Build the Perfect Team [[online](#)]

Delizonna, L. (2017). High-Performing Teams Need Psychological Safety. Here's How to Create It [[online](#)]

Through interactive exercises and hands-on practice, you'll learn how to apply OBU Leadership qualities directly to your everyday challenges, refining your situational awareness and adapting to diverse contexts and tasks. The day will culminate with a simulated real-life scenario, guided by expert academics, allowing you to put everything into action and leave with practical strategies to lead with confidence.

You may like to look at this workshop alongside our [Change Toolkit](#).

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## Identifying your leadership and management development needs

If you are reading this and wondering where to start with your leadership and management development journey we have created some templates to support you. These are each based on the same underlying leadership and management [capabilities](#) however the specific knowledge, skills and ability build and develop depending on your role/seniority.

We have then curated content in the Staff Learning Portal to signpost you to relevant development activities aligned with these. You may want to start by identifying one strength to build on or one priority for development.

| Development plan templates                                      | Development resources in Staff Learning  |
|---|--|
| <a href="#">Template: Leadership outside of managerial role</a> | <a href="#">Curated resources aimed at those not in a formal management role</a> |
| <a href="#">Template: New to management/Team leader</a>         | <a href="#">Curated resources aimed at New Managers/Team leaders</a>             |
| <a href="#">Template: Middle Manager</a>                        | Curated resources aimed at Middle Managers (coming soon)                         |

(These can also be found in the [Leadership and Management Dashboard](#) in Staff Learning)

These resources are applicable for roles in both academic and professional services. They underpin the Leadership Development element of the University's [Academic Development Framework](#).

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## Aurora



The Aurora Programme is an Advance HE initiative designed to encourage more women to move into leadership positions in HE. It is aimed at those who identify as a woman 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 yet to be finalised by Advance HE. We will provide further information about the programme and how to apply in future editions of the newsletter, via the Staff Update and our [Aurora web page](#). At this stage, anyone who might be interested in attending the programme is encouraged to discuss their interest with their line manager to see whether there is departmental budget available.

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## Building essential skills - development for other roles

We have also been reviewing our development offer for those not in managerial roles. The following resources are aimed at colleagues looking to strengthen and develop their skills.

### **Leadership as an essential skill**

Leadership is the ability to support, encourage and develop others to achieve a shared goal. This is also relevant to roles that do not have formal management responsibilities. This is why we have [curated resources aimed at those not in a formal management role](#) as part of our leadership and management development offer.

We are introducing several new workshops to develop skills that underpin leadership as well as other essential skills such as teamwork and communication.

### **Bite-size workshops:**

We have three new bite-size workshops delivered by Willow and Puddifoot.





**Enhancing Emotional Intelligence** - Develop core skills such as empathy and self-awareness by focusing on emotional intelligence and its key aspects.

**Effective communication** - Develop and apply active listening techniques. Learn how to communicate clearly, and reduce misunderstandings.



**Courageous conversations** - Develop practical skills to navigate tough conversations, using techniques to address interpersonal tensions early and prevent minor conflicts from escalating.

## **Teamwork: Conflict Resolution**

Although managers play an important role in creating a positive work environment, we each make our own contribution to the climate and culture we work in. Teamwork is an essential skill no matter what role you are in and having the skills to reduce or resolve conflict makes you a more effective team member, not to mention the potential individual benefits on our wellbeing. We may also find ourselves in other situations where we need to de-escalate a potential conflict, whether this is in the classroom or elsewhere.



The **Conflict resolution for employees** is a one-day course for anyone wanting to gain or develop their skills to help build confidence in handling conflict. By learning these essential skills, delegates can tackle and manage difficult or threatening conflict effectively, helping to resolve situations, reduce stress, and improve mental health.

## Teamwork: Collaboration, Communication and Belonging

We all know that the most effective teams benefit from diversity of opinion and experience, however, differing needs can sometimes get in the way of productive, collaborative relationships and effective communication.



**Hear & Be Heard: Fostering Respectful Dialogue and Collaboration** - This programme consists of four half-day sessions over a month. Based on Non-Violent Communication (NVC) , a proven framework for enhancing empathy, improving communication, and addressing interpersonal differences, it will give participants practical skills to help maximise understanding.

### Other resources to develop essential skills

There are also a range of other resources in the [Essential Skills Catalogue](#) in Staff Learning covering communication, problem solving, achieving goals and more

Potential to use the Essential Skills framework to identify needs and for developing transferable skills to support career development. Align with person specification.

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## \*New\* Financial Wellbeing Courses

We have two new financial wellbeing courses, delivered by Navigate.



**One Shop - Stop!** Uncover the sneaky marketing tricks used by brands like Amazon, Temu, and Shein to get you to spend more. Learn how to spot psychological sales tactics, avoid buyer's remorse, and resist the traps of influencer marketing. Take control of your shopping habits and keep more money in your pocket!

**Red Flags and Rip Offs!** Arm yourself with the knowledge to spot scams and outsmart fraudsters. Learn how to safeguard your finances, recognise common tricks, and keep your money safe in an increasingly digital world. Don't get caught out—stay one step ahead!



## 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](#)
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## Keeping in touch

**Learning and Organisational Development**

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