

# AURORA

FUTURE • CHANGE • GROWTH



## Aurora

### Welcome to higher education's pioneering leadership development initiative for women.

Aurora is a leadership ignition journey, inspiring women to achieve their career goals in higher education through a combination of individual and group learning, mentoring and networking.

Run as a collaboration between Advance HE in conjunction with higher education (HE) institutions and advocates - known as Aurora Champions - Aurora is a community of women who have been motivated to seek and achieve leadership roles within HE.

Once part of the community, participants continue to enjoy the support and inspiration of fellow Aurorans throughout their leadership journey and beyond.

### Who is Aurora for?

Aurora is for women who have not undertaken any leadership training before. This approximately lends itself to being appropriate for up to senior lecturer level or the professional services equivalent, working in a university, college or related organisation who would like to develop and explore issues relating to leadership roles and responsibilities.

### How does Aurora work?

To join the programme, delegates must have the endorsement of their human resources department, line manager or their institution's 'Aurora Champion', a dedicated member of staff who acts as a conduit between participants, mentors and Advance HE. You can find details of your institution's champion(s) in our [Aurora Champions Directory](#)

Delegates will also work with a mentor with whom they will meet at regular stages throughout the programme.



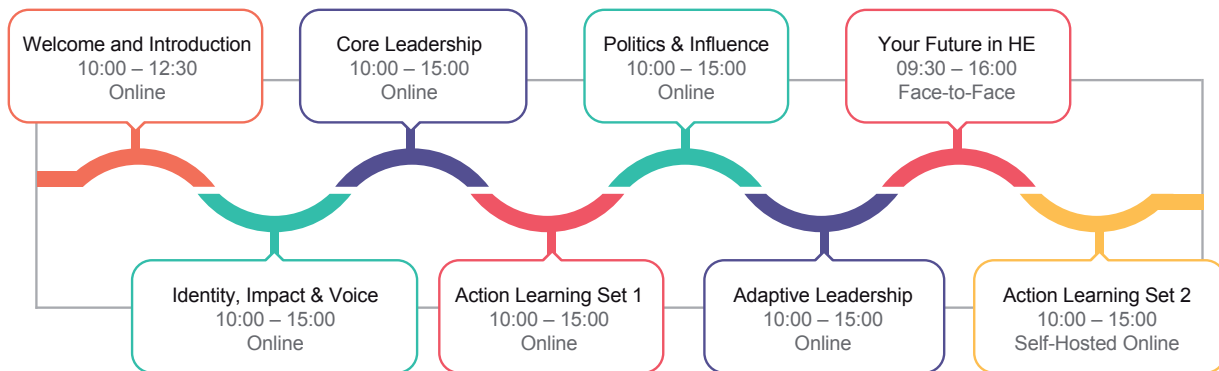
A life changing experience and a course which I wish I had taken years ago.”

Elen Mai Nefydd,  
Wrexham University

## How is Aurora Delivered

Aurora has seven regional cohorts delivered online consisting of a Welcome and Introduction, four development days and two days devoted to Action Learning Sets. Delegates can mark the end of their Aurora journey with the final face-to-face development day - Your Future in HE.

### Program Delivery



## Welcome and Introduction

The Welcome and Introduction session is an integral part of the programme. It will give participants an opportunity to meet their fellow Aurorans and start forming relationships crucial for their development. We will discuss how the Aurora journey will unfold throughout the year and offer some practical information about the online delivery platforms used on Aurora. The delegates will hear from an inspirational speaker who will share her experience of being a woman leader. They will also be invited to reflect on their individual objectives for taking part in Aurora.

## Identity, Impact and Voice

Identity, Impact and Voice will launch participants into their leadership journey by asking them 'what makes you, you' and focusing on the people who have inspired them. We will also discuss how their identity impacts their leadership in positive ways. Lastly, we will be thinking about what it means to be on the receiving end of each participant, how they show up and how they might flex their communication style to have a greater impact on all those around them.



## Core Leadership

Core Leadership is all about you – who you are, what matters to you, and how to mobilise the tools in your REAL leadership toolbox. Working together, supporting each other, we explore purpose and values and what these mean for leaders. Articulating the what and the why of your leadership brings clarity about you and what you represent. Sharing our stories and experiences, we explore leadership in HE, further developing your network.



## ■ Action Learning Set 1

The first of these two sessions will be hosted by Advance HE, and the delegates will be introduced to the peer-to-peer support process of Action Learning Sets (ALS). This is a widely used and reliable model for helping people form supportive groups, develop their listening and communication skills and solve their own issues within their career. Following an introduction to the process of ALS, delegates will be allocated to groups of 4–5 from a mixture of institutions and areas of higher education, where they will spend the duration of the session developing those skills through an experiential learning process.

## ■ Politics & Influence

This development day invites delegates to look at their individual leadership against the backdrop of their institution's culture and politics. They will be invited to assess their emotional intelligence and personal influence, and emerge with an enhanced ability to amplify the profile they want to nurture. They will be encouraged to think about building coalitions, developing networks and making lasting, mutually supportive connections.

## ■ Adaptive Leadership

Leadership is really tested when the environment is challenging or when there are no easy solutions. A leader's ability to be heard and their courage to speak up are essential in this context. This day will look at how the tools of adaptive leadership could enhance the delegate's performance and success, as well as enable them to reflect on the leader that they want to be in the future.



## ■ Your Future in HE

Your Future in HE is to serve as the ultimate day of development, providing ample opportunities for Aurorans to engage, network, and connect with one another in person. This includes meeting and catching up with their respective action learning set groups.

“

This programme gave the positive mindset shift I didn't know I needed - it is truly one of the best things I have ever done.”

Rebecca Marsden, TUS

## ■ Action Learning Set 2

For this final session, delegates reconvene and host their own Action Learning Set group online, where they continue to support each other using the ALS process, further developing their communication and listening skills. They host this session themselves and it is with the same group they joined on Action Learning Set 1.

## ■ Mentoring

Mentoring is an essential element of Aurora with delegates working with a mentor and meeting approximately 4-6 times over the duration of the programme. Delegates should discuss their mentoring arrangements with their Aurora Champion or sponsor before starting the programme.



## ■ Aurora Community

Once participants join Aurora, they will become part of our alumnae community, which aims to provide opportunities for Aurorans to connect with current and past participants from both the UK and internationally through our Advance HE Connect Platform. Aurorans will have access to the international Aurora Community for online networking. We also host our free virtual Aurora Community: Network and Exchange events, allowing participants to meet other Aurorans and discuss key topics and issues.

Once delegates have completed the Aurora programme, they can continue their leadership journey with the support of the Aurora Community which provides ongoing free events for Alumnae.

For those seeking further professional development, our **Aurora Alumnae Development Workshops** offer additional support for advancing their leadership skills. For more details, visit [Aurora Alumnae](#).



“

Aurora's been a big career launchpad for me. It has changed how I see myself.”

Associate Professor of  
Modern History,  
Swansea University

## How to book onto Aurora

Aurora prospective delegates should first contact their [Aurora Champion](#) or other Learning and Development Sponsor at their institution. Aurora is a collaboration between the institution and Advance HE, and programme places are often managed by an institution's internal recruitment process. Please visit the [Aurora Champion Directory](#) for their contact details.

## Aurora Champions

Aurora Champions or those looking to become a champion should contact our support team at [aurora@advance-he.ac.uk](mailto:aurora@advance-he.ac.uk) to make enquiries. Details of how to book onto Aurora will be shared directly with Aurora Champions via their email newsletter.

## About Advance HE

- + Advance HE was created to provide dedicated support to the HE sector. Our purpose is to support universities in putting institutional strategy into practice for the benefit of students, staff and society.
- + Our development portfolio has been developed from over 14 years' experience of working with peers across: teaching and learning; equality, diversity and inclusion; leadership and management; and governance.
- + In common with all of our programmes Aurora is characterised by active participation, where sharing and learning from experience provokes debate, builds confidence and promotes best practice.

## Useful links and resources

- [Aurora: find out more](#)
- [Aurora Champion directory](#)
- [Aurora Champions information](#)
- [Aurora Alumnae Community](#)



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