

Mentoring for Academics

At BU staff have always benefited from a range of informal mentoring opportunities and will continue to do so. The University is currently creating opportunities for staff to engage in more formal mentoring, as well as other mentoring development.

As part of the induction process, all staff are matched with an induction buddy to assist them in settling in at BU.

The way in which mentoring schemes are designed and run varies across faculties. However, as part of the BU2025 strategy, all academic staff will have a research mentor. Some faculties already have mentoring in place for all staff (FHSS, FMC), while others are developing 'in-house' schemes. BU has invested in SUMAC software to support the matching of people and administration of mentoring.

A number of female academics are funded to participate in the Aurora Programme (LFHE), which provides Aurora Mentors from within BU. Aurora Mentors participate in workshops to explore the role of the Mentor, consider key skills and approaches, and critique mentoring models in order to support Aurorans effectively. During 18/19 OD will consolidate work with all Aurora cohorts and encourage Aurorans to become 'role models' (supporting new Aurorans as part of our Citizenship agenda) as well as offering support in terms of mentoring relationships and other development opportunities.

All mentors are offered support and development so they are best able to help individuals become more adept at managing themselves and their relationships and at achieving performance and career goals. BU provide Handbooks for both mentors and mentees, to ensure both parties receive the full benefits of a thriving mentoring relationship.

Mentoring for Students

BU Alumni are trialling an [Alumni Mentors scheme](#) for final year students as they prepare for employment. The pilot will run from Oct. 18 to Mar. 19 where Alumni volunteers are matched with a student whose area of study complements their area of skills or experience. The mentor shares their experience of graduating from BU and entering the working world; shares insights and advice to particular industry/professions; offers careers advice; and provides industry specific information which could support a student project. This is provided through 1-2-1 e-mentoring and the partnership is for a minimum of three months.

The trial is taking place with students in Public Relations (on its 2nd cohort), Media Production, Design and Engineering, and Computing and Informatics. Mentors are being sought in other areas. Existing mentors have agreed to be guest speakers at BU careers advice workshops.

Academic Development

BU's Organisational Development Team, the Research and Knowledge Exchange Office, and the Doctoral College run a range of development programmes for staff at all levels and PhD students, some of these are particularly relevant to supporting women's career development - all those listed here have a focus on maximising potential.

The **Academic Leadership Programme** on Talent, Performance and Succession Management has focused senior leaders and other key stakeholders on co-creating the culture, structures and processes to enable BU to identify and nurture talent, manage performance and undertake succession planning effectively. This is the foundation for ensuring BU are well placed to recruit, support and retain top teams and individuals who will move us towards and to ultimately deliver BU2025.

Programme Leaders are offered **Enhancing Practice & Developing the Self: The BU Certificate in Programme Leadership** – this unit provides an opportunity to reflect on their skills as Programme Leaders and to develop these further as role models and motivators for others to follow, creating a culture of creativity and continuous improvement.

Improving Personal & Organisational Performance (IPOP) - this 4 day programme has a particular focus on equipping individuals with practical tools and techniques to manage and lead themselves and others in a culture of constant change and service development. There is a focus on managing self and others through a range of strategies and models that support effective behaviour. Participants are expected to apply appropriate theories and frameworks in reflecting on and analysing complex, work-related situations.

Research and Knowledge Exchange Development Framework (RKEDF)

The [RKEDF](#) offers a range of opportunities for academics at all career stages to develop their skills, knowledge and capabilities in relation to R&KE. Over 150 opportunities are available each year and sessions are grouped around a particular audience and their needs.

The RKEDF offers introductory sessions on external funders through to grant writing workshops. This includes the [Research Council Development Scheme](#), which is a coordinated, targeted set of activities designed to inspire and equip BU researchers to achieve greater success with Research Council funding. It consists of cohorts at three career stages to ensure the funding opportunities are targeted. The second round will launch in Nov. 18.

The [Writing Academy](#) enables academics to develop the skills required to improve the quantity and quality of research outputs and develop a publication strategy. It provides access to external consultants, peer support, and time to write.

BU also has an Early Career Researcher Network, which offers discussions on career planning, assessing personal gaps and solutions, Athena SWAN activities, mentoring support, and sharing experiences with peers. There is also an [online community](#) for sharing and discussing ideas. Acorn funds are available to ECRs (<£5k) to develop their research careers (terms apply).

The RKEDF also provides training in impact, the REF, international research, building teams, research career advice, and the day-to-day requirements for applying for and managing awarded funds. For 2018/19, there will be specific research career development options which will include career planning, career advancement and promotion, returning to work after a break, etc. These will be developed with the Athena SWAN group and OD.

Academic Development

Induction

BU's main induction vehicle is the New Staff Induction event, a half-day session that runs once a month for all new staff at BU. The event provides an introduction to the BU2025 strategy and covers a range of topics including health, safety and wellbeing; equality and diversity; and staff development opportunities. There is an 'information fair' with a range of stands run by colleagues from across BU who provide information and answer queries about BU departments, benefits and support. There are plenty of opportunities to network with new and existing staff from across BU.

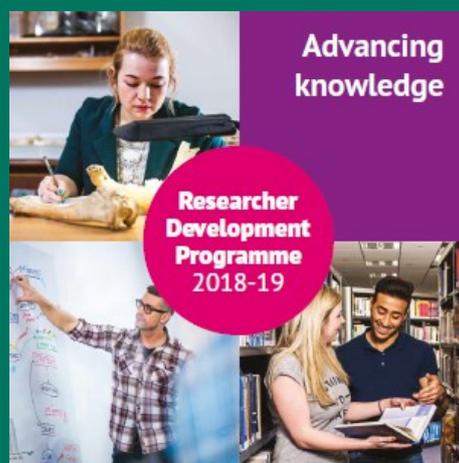
New academic staff are invited to two further inductions: i) Academic Induction; and, ii) RKEO Academic and Researcher Induction. These run biannually. The Academic Induction aims to outline the BU Fusion model and what this looks like in practice, the Academic Career Framework and Academic Career Development at BU. The RKEO Academic and Researcher Induction is open to new academic and research staff and covers the essential information about engaging with research at BU.

Managers are responsible for the local induction of new staff. A standard Induction Checklist guides managers through this process, including ensuring new starters complete the Marshalls Online equality and diversity module (as of 2018 this includes specific information on Athena SWAN). Enhancements of the current support and resources offered to staff new to BU/role/duty, including refreshed online resources, introduction of a physical welcome pack on their first day, are planned for 18/19, along with a refreshed approach to mandatory /essential development opportunities.

Support for PGRs

The BU Doctoral College offer an induction to all new PGRs as well as a [Researcher Development Programme](#) each year, linked to Vitae. This provides a number of workshops, modules and online resources throughout the year to support PGRs whilst at BU and for future careers.

The Doctoral College also manage the Santander Mobility Fund, which supports PGRs to attend and present at conferences and networking events.



Career Progression

Staff have access to a range of formal and informal opportunities, together with online resources, linked to the Academic Career Framework. These learning resources and activities support effective 3-5 year personal and professional development planning (PPDP) for academic staff.

Mentoring and coaching are a major part of the BU2025 strategy. As such, there are opportunities for staff to participate in career mentoring and coaching sessions to support them in clarifying and realising their career aspirations and building self-confidence.



Networks

BU Women's Academic Network

The Women's Academic Network ([WAN](#)) is aligned closely with the Athena SWAN agenda. Three of the WAN co-convenors sit on the Athena SWAN Self-Assessment Team, providing invaluable experience and knowledge of gender-related issues both within and outside of BU. In addition, the many and diverse events run by WAN, (funded by BU) are evidence of the university's engagement with, and enthusiasm for, gender equality. The WAN hosted events raise awareness of the issues facing women in academia and supports them in their career, through, for example, running workshops on applying for promotion and unconscious bias.

WAN activities include: meeting the editor of 'The Conversation' in order to boost the number of women academics gaining impact for their work by writing such mass media output; WAN launched its first book: 'Talk About Success: BU Women Academic Speak'. Together with OD, WAN run workshops for female academics on 'academic resilience', 'going for promotion', and interactive discussions: 'career progression: rhetoric and realities', featuring professorial panellists exploring the paths and pitfalls of career progression in HE. International Women's Day 2018 included a showing of WAN member, Sue Sudbury's award-winning film 'Village Tales', and main speaker, Prof. Gráinne Conole spoke about her journey to become a 4* international research professor and HEA National Teaching Fellow. WAN seminar series have included, Prof. Rosalind Gill discussing her work on the gendered implications of the so-called 'culture of confidence'; Prof. Maggie Berg and Prof. Barbara Seeber, authors of the academic feminist manifesto 'The Slow Professor,' discussing 'Reclaiming the academic: Scholarship, gender and consumerism'. The WAN [seminar series for 2018/19](#) is now available, together with [ESRC Festival of Social Science](#) funded WAN events in Nov. 18.

All new staff are informed of WAN at induction. Do contact co-convenors Lorraine Brown, Frances Hawkhead (all also AS SAT) or Jayne Caudwell for more information.

Case study: Professor Heather Hartwell Foodservice and Applied Nutrition Research, Faculty of Management

Heather came to BU from industry and started to work with a professor who immediately saw the advantage of cross-disciplinary activity. She, under his guidance, started to work on projects for Government agencies, such as the National Audit Office and the US military matching her discipline background with his.

After some years developing her skills and being introduced to networks she became confident about taking the lead in small steps. She applied for the BU Releasing Potential scheme, which involved workshops, coaching and being part of a cohort of likeminded colleagues. This was the "Best ever", not only did it lead to her first successful bid as a Principal Investigator but also to much greater job satisfaction and general enjoyment of working at BU.

Heather's advice is "Successful bids tend to lead to more success, autonomy as an academic – and comes with the pleasure of bringing on younger colleagues as you build up a team. Enjoy your working day – participate in personal development that match your aspirations, get to know your RKEO colleagues (there's always a cup of tea on offer) and never give up. Success comes at the most unexpected time and sometimes quite late in life!"



Promotion

BU runs an annual promotions process, open to all academic staff, to retain excellent staff, recognise their achievements, and enable them to progress their careers at BU. The BU Academic Career Framework provides indicative performance levels at each grade as well as examples of what is expected for promotion; this includes work-related activities such as leadership and citizenship. Staff are invited to apply for promotion via an email from HR and are encouraged to seek advice from their manager, mentor, appraiser and/or other colleagues as well as to attend promotion and career development workshops. Staff complete the promotions application form and submit this alongside their academic profile/CV and references, to HR. They must demonstrate how they meet the expectations of the appropriate level as outlined in the BU Academic Career Framework.

To consider pay and promotion applications we have a cohort of trained Independent Pay Progression/Promotion Panel Members (IPPPMs). They undertake mandatory development including unconscious bias and equitable selection and are provided with information on how to take breaks in career into account. Their role is to ensure the principles of the BU Academic Career Framework are applied in a transparent, fair, equitable and consistent manner across the University. Applications are shortlisted by Independent Pay Progression and Promotion Panels (IPPPPs). Shortlisted applicants are invited to attend a panel interview. The panel consider each case on its own merits.

Personal and Professional Development Planning and Appraisals

Our Performance Management Framework is underpinned by a personal and professional development planning and appraisal scheme for academic staff. The scheme promotes continuous performance improvement, continuous learning and development and self-assessment; which should lead to optimisation of staff job satisfaction, morale and motivation. Each staff member has an annual review with their manager to agree a personal and professional development plan (PPDP), review performance, plan balanced workloads and agree objectives for the forthcoming year. This is followed by an interim review mid-way through the year. The focus throughout the year is on regular conversations. This approach supports staff to prepare for promotion in line with the Academic Career Matrix.

Academic staff have devised a refreshed approach to PPDP/appraisal whilst retaining the principles of regular career and performance focused conversations, which is being implemented from January 2019.

Case Study: Dr Huiwen Zhao , Postdoctoral Researcher in Education (Impact study), The Centre for Excellence in Learning

Huiwen joined BU as a Marie Curie research fellow in 2015 from a Chinese university. She was supervised by a professor and was invited to training sessions and seminars to become familiar with the BU research environment. As her research progressed she was introduced to professionals from industry and encouraged to network.

In 2016, she welcomed the first child to her family. Back from maternity leave, the university provided support for completing her project, for example, university-based childcare (special rate for BU employees) and a private room available for breastfeeding.

As her research skills and confidence grew, she joined a BU researcher network and BU Research Council Development scheme, which helped her to apply for research funding and lead a research project. As a result, she submitted a grant to AHRC. Her Marie Curie research project came to an end in 2018 and she has carried on her career at BU as a postdoctoral researcher.

